



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR  
450 110<sup>th</sup> Ave NE., P.O. BOX 90012  
BELLEVUE, WA 98009-9012

**OPTIONAL DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE (DNS) NOTICE MATERIALS**

The attached materials are being sent to you pursuant to the requirements for the Optional DNS Process (WAC 197-11-355). A DNS on the attached proposal is likely. This may be the only opportunity to comment on environmental impacts of the proposal. Mitigation measures from standard codes will apply. Project review may require mitigation regardless of whether an EIS is prepared. A copy of the subsequent threshold determination for this proposal may be obtained upon request.

File No. 17-120230 AC

Project Name/Address: Downtown Transportation Plan Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA)

Planner: Nicholas Matz AICP

Phone Number: 425-452-5371

**Minimum Comment Period: October 4, 2017**

Materials included in this Notice:

- ☒ Blue Bulletin
- ☒ Checklist
- ☐ Vicinity Map
- ☐ Plans
- ☐ Other:

FEBRUARY 2017



# **DOWNTOWN LIVABILITY INITIATIVE**

## **DOWNTOWN LAND USE CODE AMENDMENTS**

### **DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE**

#### SEPA Expanded Environmental Checklist







# CONTENTS



	Introduction. . . . .	1
<b>1</b>	SEPA Environmental Checklist Part A: Background. . . . .	3
<b>2</b>	Summary . . . . .	9
	Proposal. . . . .	9
	Environmental Review. . . . .	16
<b>3</b>	Proposal Overview. . . . .	21
	Description of the Proposal. . . . .	21
	Background. . . . .	45
	Planning Framework. . . . .	51
	Environmental Review. . . . .	58
	Public Outreach . . . . .	63
<b>4</b>	SEPA Environmental Checklist Part B: Environmental Elements. . . . .	69

<b>5</b>	<b>SEPA Environmental Checklist Part D: Supplemental Sheet for Nonproject Actions . . . . .</b>	<b>71</b>
	Supplemental City of Bellevue Questions . . . . .	78
<b>6</b>	<b>Environmental Issue Papers. . . . .</b>	<b>85</b>
	Introduction. . . . .	85
	Building Height and Form . . . . .	85
	Amenity Incentive System. . . . .	102
	Design Guidelines . . . . .	118
	Transportation . . . . .	138
<b>7</b>	<b>SEPA Environmental Checklist Part C: Signatures . . . . .</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>Draft Code Amendments . . . . .</b>	<b>A-1</b>



# INTRODUCTION



The City of Bellevue has prepared this expanded SEPA Environmental Checklist to study the potential environmental implications of a proposal that includes (1) adoption of amendments to the Downtown Master Transportation Plan and (2) adoption of code amendments to implement the City's Downtown Livability Initiative. It is intended that the City and public will use this environmental analysis to help shape decisions on the proposed update.

This environmental document has been prepared in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Washington State Environment Policy Act (SEPA). The standard Environmental Checklist form has been integrated with an expanded description and analysis of the proposal in order to support future decision-making. This is a GMA action and environmental review is being conducted in an integrated SEPA/GMA document. Environmental documentation contained in this document provides the basis for the City's threshold determination. The document is organized as follows:

- 1. SEPA Environmental Checklist Part A: Background.** Part A provides background information on the proposal and proponent. Part A serves as a fact sheet, as established in WAC 197-11-235(3)(b).
- 2. Summary.** Provides a brief overview of the information considered in this environmental document, including a short description of the proposal and findings of the environmental issue papers. This summary fulfills the requirement for an environmental summary established in WAC 197-11-235(3)(b).

3. **Proposal Overview.** Includes a description of the proposal, state and regional policy framework and environmental review process.
4. **SEPA Environmental Checklist Part B: Environmental Elements.** Includes a statement that Part B is not required to be completed in an integrated SEPA/GMA document.
5. **SEPA Environmental Checklist Part D: Supplemental Sheet for Nonproject Actions.** Contains the questions and responses to the SEPA Checklist Supplemental Sheet for Non-Project Actions.
6. **Environmental Issue Papers.** Includes four issue papers that correspond to comprehensive plan elements and discuss the potential implications of the proposed action.
7. **SEPA Environmental Checklist Part C: Signatures.** Contains the SEPA Checklist signature page.

# 1

## SEPA Environmental Checklist Part A: Background

1. **Name of proposed project, if applicable:** City of Bellevue Downtown Livability Initiative and Downtown Transportation Master Plan Update
2. **Name of applicant:** City of Bellevue Planning and Community Development Department
3. **Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:**  
City of Bellevue  
Planning and Community Development Department  
450 110th Avenue NE  
Bellevue, WA 98009  
  
Contact: Emil King, Strategic Planning Manager  
(425) 452-7223
4. **Date checklist prepared:** September 2016–February 2017
5. **Agency requesting checklist:** City of Bellevue Development Services Department
6. **Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):**  
Downtown Livability Initiative. In spring 2013, the Bellevue City Council convened the Downtown Livability Advisory Committee and charged them to provide guidance to City staff in developing recommendations



to update the Downtown Land Use Code. At about that same time, the City began public outreach and engagement for the project, including open houses, focus group meetings, walking tours, community meetings, and ongoing public Citizen Advisory Committee meetings. Please see Chapter 3 (Proposal Overview) for additional discussion of public outreach and participation.

*Downtown Transportation Plan Update.* In the City of Bellevue 2011-2012 budget, the City Council approved capital and operating funding to support an update to the Downtown Transportation Plan, and directed the Transportation Commission to develop a comprehensive mobility strategy to support Downtown growth to 2030 and beyond. The Commission's task, as the City Council defined it, was to prepare a plan to provide mobility options for people to get around to, from and within Downtown Bellevue. The Transportation Commission began work on the Downtown Transportation Plan Update in 2012 and a set of recommendations was forwarded to the City Council in 2013.

The Planning Commission is expected to make a recommendation on the draft Land Use Code amendments to the City Council in April/May 2017. City Council action on the Land Use Code amendments is anticipated to occur in mid-2017.

**7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.**

No.

**8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.**

An Environmental Checklist for the Downtown Livability Initiative code amendments was originally published on November 15, 2012. This checklist was used for the threshold determination/Determination of Non-significance, issued on November 12, 2015.

**9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.**

On an ongoing basis, the City receives private and public proposals for land use and other actions that are within the area covered by the Land Use Code and Downtown Transportation Plan. These proposals are reviewed for consistency with adopted plans and policies and applicable regulations.

**10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.**

- Bellevue City Council adoption
- Verification of GMA compliance by WA Department of Commerce
- Certification by Puget Sound Regional Council

**11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)**

The proposed action includes two major elements:

- (1) An update of the Downtown Land Use Code consistent with the vision set forth in the existing Downtown Subarea Plan and by the Project Principles approved by the City Council on January 22, 2013 (Table 1). Major areas addressed in the amendments include:
  - a. Public open space
  - b. Pedestrian corridor
  - c. Design guidelines
  - d. Amenity incentive system
  - e. Station area planning
  - f. Building height and form
  - g. Downtown parking

**Table 1** City Council Principles for Downtown Livability Initiative

Change	Principle
After several development cycles since the original Code adoption, it has become increasingly clear what is working and not working with development incentives.	<b>1</b> Refine the incentive system to develop the appropriate balance between private return on investment and public benefit.
Downtown Bellevue has experienced a massive influx of new residents. This has helped create long hoped-for urban qualities, but also led to increased frictions that occur in a dense, mixed use environment.	<b>2</b> Promote elements that make Downtown a great urban environment while also softening undesirable side effects on Downtown residents.
Downtown has seen a significant increase in pedestrians and street-level activity.	<b>3</b> Increase Downtown's liveliness, street presence, and the overall quality of the pedestrian environment.
Through new development, Downtown has an opportunity to create more memorable places, as well as a distinctive skyline.	<b>4</b> Promote a distinctive and memorable skyline that sets Downtown apart from other cities, and likewise create more memorable streets, public spaces, and opportunities for activities and events.
Environmental rules and strategies have evolved over the past decades since the Downtown Code was adopted.	<b>5</b> Encourage sustainability and green building innovation in Downtown development. Enable design that promotes water, resource, and energy conservation, and that advances ecological function and integrity.
Downtown is attracting a younger and more diverse demographic mix, of workers, visitors, and residents.	<b>6</b> Respond to Downtown's changing demographics by meeting the needs of a wide range of ages and backgrounds for an enlivening, safe and supportive environment.
As Downtown has become a more mature urban center, it is experiencing an increase in visitors and more interest in tourism.	<b>7</b> Promote elements that will create a great visitor experience and a more vital tourism sector for Downtown.
We live in an increasingly global economy, with flows of goods and services, capital and people transcending state and national boundaries.	<b>8</b> Strengthen Downtown's competitive position in the global and regional economy, while reinforcing local roots and local approaches.
Downtown's relationship with adjacent residential neighborhoods has evolved. It remains important to achieve a transition in building form and intensity between Downtown and adjacent residents, but nearby neighborhoods are also seeking the attractions that the city center brings.	<b>9</b> Maintain graceful transitions with adjoining residential neighborhoods, while integrating these neighborhoods through linkages to Downtown attractions.
The development arena is becoming increasingly competitive, as Downtown continues to seek quality investments that implement the Subarea Plan vision.	<b>10</b> Refine the Code to provide a good balance between predictability and flexibility, in the continuing effort to attract high quality development that is economically feasible and enhances value for all users.
As Downtown has matured and filled in, opportunities for quality development are becoming limited, and expectations have grown as to how each development contributes to the greater whole.	<b>11</b> Promote through each development an environment that is aesthetically beautiful and of high quality in design, form and materials; and that reinforces the identity and sense of place for Downtown and for distinct districts.
Bellevue's park and open space system has dramatically evolved, for example with acquisition and planning for Meydenbauer Bay Park, development of the Downtown Park, and the nearby Botanical Garden on Wilburton Hill.	<b>12</b> Advance the theme of "City in a Park" for Downtown, creating more green features, public open space, trees and landscaping; and promoting connections to the rest of the park and open space system.

- (2) An update of the Downtown Transportation Plan, intended to develop a comprehensive future mobility strategy to support Downtown growth to 2030 and beyond, consistent with the Project Principles adopted by the City Council on February 6, 2012 (Table 2). Topics addressed in the recommended Downtown Transportation Plan include:
- a. Roadways/vehicles
  - b. Transit
  - c. Pedestrians
  - d. Bicycles

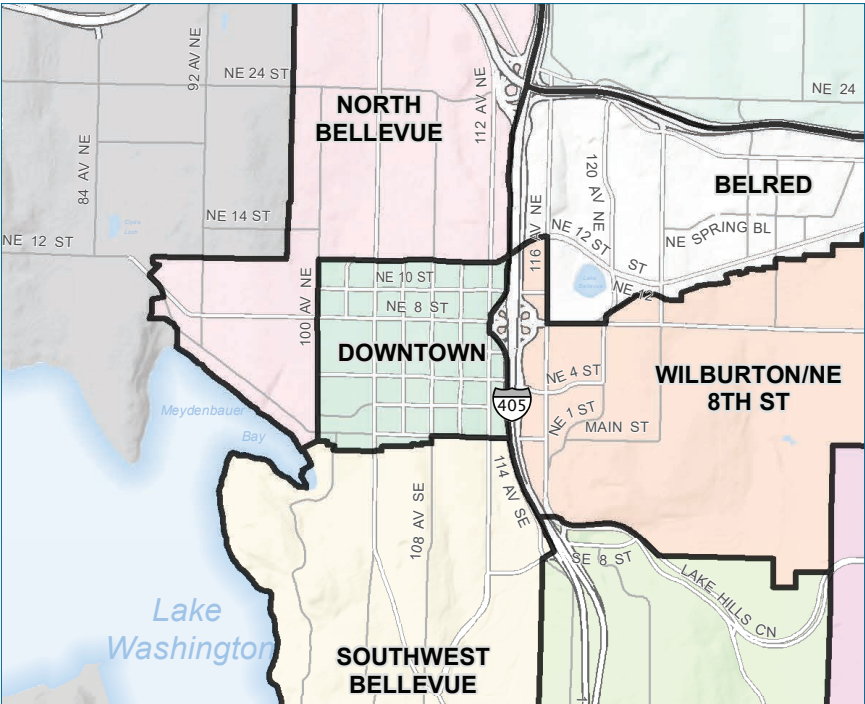
**Table 2** City Council Principles for Downtown Transportation Update

### Principles

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | Plan for multiple modes of travel within and to and from Downtown Bellevue.          |
| 2  | Accommodate the anticipated travel demands from the 2030 land use forecast.          |
| 3  | Advance the adopted vision for Downtown Bellevue.                                    |
| 4  | Recognize changes in the regional and local transportation and land use environment. |
| 5  | Integrate City Council direction.  |
| 6  | Provide for comprehensive public involvement.  |
| 7  | Minimize traffic impacts on neighborhoods.   |
| 8  | Involve regional transportation and planning partners.                               |
| 9  | Leverage funding from outside sources to implement projects.                         |
| 10 | Utilize measures of effectiveness to evaluate potential projects.                    |

**12. Location of the proposal.** Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

Downtown Bellevue is generally bounded by NE 12th Street on the north, 100th Avenue NE on the west, and I-405 on the east. The south boundary follows Main Street between I-405 and 108th Avenue NE and an irregular boundary the follows property lines south of Main Street between 108th Avenue NE and 100th Avenue NE. Please see Figure 1, Vicinity Map.



### Figure 1 Vicinity Map

# 2

## Summary

This chapter provides a brief overview of the information considered in this environmental document, including a short description of the proposal and findings of the environmental issue papers. Please consult the balance of this document for more information on these topics.

### *Proposal*

The proposed action includes two major elements:

1. An update of the Downtown Land Use Code consistent with the vision set forth in the existing Downtown Subarea Plan and by the Project Principles approved by the City Council on January 22, 2013 (see Table 1 in Chapter 1).
2. An update of the Downtown Transportation Plan, intended to develop a comprehensive future mobility strategy to support Downtown growth to 2030 and beyond and consistent with the Project Principles approved by the City Council on February 6, 2012 (see Table 2 in Chapter 1). Topics addressed in the recommended Downtown Transportation Plan include:
  - a. Roadways/vehicles
  - b. Transit
  - c. Pedestrians
  - d. Bicycles

A short summary of the proposed amendments to the Downtown Land Use Code and the Downtown Transportation Plan is provided below. Please see Chapter 3 for a complete description of the proposal.

### *Downtown Land Use Code*

Recommendations in the proposed Land Use Code are part of the Downtown Livability Initiative, a city initiative to make the Downtown more people-friendly, vibrant and memorable and to add to the amenities that make for a great city center. Specific objectives of the Downtown Livability Initiative include:

- Better achieve the vision for downtown as a vibrant, mixed-use center
- Enhance the pedestrian environment
- Improve the area as a residential setting
- Enhance the identity and character of downtown neighborhoods
- Incorporate elements from Downtown Transportation Plan Update and East Link design work

The recommended land use code amendments in the proposal have been developed through an extensive public review process that began in early 2013 with the convening of the Downtown Livability Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and continued through Planning Commission review and recommendation of the proposed amendments. Major milestones along the way have included issuance of the CAC Final Report in 2014 and adoption of the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Wins Code Amendments in 2016. The current proposal would result in a comprehensive update of the Downtown Land Use Code and represents another major milestone in City's Downtown Livability Initiative.

Table 3 provides a short summary of changes proposed for each section of the recommended Downtown Land Use Code.

**Table 3** Overview of Downtown Livability Recommended Land Use Code Amendments and Environmental Review

Topics	Proposed Change and Environmental Analysis
<b>Section 20.25A.10</b> General	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> Reorganization for ease of use and new titles and boundaries of overlay districts.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> Proposed changes are primarily administrative and unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment. This section is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.</p>
<b>Section 20.25A.020</b> Definitions	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> Reorganization of ease of use and updated definitions to support a consistent understanding of the terms used in the Downtown Land Use Code.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> Proposed changes are primarily administrative and unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment. This section is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.</p>
<b>Section 20.25A.030</b> Application Review <i>Moved from 20.25A.010 &amp; expanded</i>	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> Establishes the regulatory framework for downtown development review and supports ease of use.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> Proposed changes are primarily administrative and unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment. One proposed amendment would provide a new administrative process to modify provisions of the Land Use Code. This amendment is further described and discussed in the Development Standards and Design Guidelines Issue Paper.</p>
<b>Section 20.25A.040</b> Nonconforming Uses, Structures and Sites <i>Moved from 20.25A.025</i>	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> Correct internal references, streamline the review process for nonconforming use expansions and allow nonconforming structures that are destroyed to be rebuilt consistent with its nonconformity.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> Proposed changes are primarily procedural and unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment. This section is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.</p>
<b>Section 20.25A.050</b> Land Use Charts <i>Moved from 20.25A.015</i> <i>Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments*</i>	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> The majority of amendments to the Land Use Charts were adopted in March 2016 as part of the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments. In the current proposal, amendments include updated citations in the transportation and utilities use zone chart notes and a new residential note regarding the Senior Congregate Care Center use in the DNTN-O-2 zone.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> These minor revisions are unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment and are not further discussed as part of this SEPA review.</p>
<b>Section 20.25A.060</b> Dimensional Standards <i>Moved from 20.25A.020.A.2</i>	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> Significant revisions with changes to the dimensional requirements in several of the downtown zones and perimeter overlay districts, and modifications to setbacks, stepbacks and height exceptions.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> Potential environmental implications are discussed in the Building Height and Form Issue Paper (Chapter 6).</p>

\*Recommended Downtown Land Use Code may include revisions in addition to those in the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Wins Code Amendments.

*continued on following page*



**Table 3** Overview of Downtown Livability Recommended Land Use Code Amendments and Environmental Review (cont.)

Topics	Proposed Change and Environmental Analysis
<b>Section 20.25A.070</b> FAR/Amenity Incentive System <i>Moved from 20.25A.030</i>	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> Significant revisions with updates to the amenities and to the model for calculation of the exchange rate between amenities and bonus FAR and height.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> Potential environmental implications are discussed in the Amenity Incentive System Issue Paper (Chapter 6).</p>
<b>Section 20.25A.080</b> Parking Standards <i>Moved from 20.25A.050</i>	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> Proposed changes to parking standards would add visitor and bicycle parking requirements, increase parking structure entry height requirements to allow for accessible vans and allow flexibility to modify parking requirements based on parking studies.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> These minor revisions are unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment and are not further discussed as part of this SEPA review.</p>
<b>Section 20.25A.090</b> Street & Pedestrian Circulation Standards <i>Moved from 20.25A.060 and 20.25A.090.E</i> <i>Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments*</i>	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> Substantive changes would widen sidewalk widths; remaining proposed changes are primarily organizational and procedural.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> These revisions are unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment and are not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.</p>
<b>Section 20.25A.100</b> Downtown Pedestrian Bridges <i>Moved from 20.25A.130</i>	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> Establishes the development agreement process [LUC 20.25A.030] as the review procedure for pedestrian bridge location and design plans.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> This change is unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment and is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.</p>
<b>Section 20.25A.110</b> Landscape Development <i>Moved from 20.25A.060, 20.25A.040, and 20.25A.090.D.4</i> <i>Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments*</i>	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> Amendments were adopted in March 2016 as part of the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments. In the current proposal, proposed changes would allow for flexibility in changing tree species if necessary and update the linear buffer standards.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> These minor revisions are unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment and are not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.</p>
<b>Section 20.25A.120</b> Green & Sustainability Factor <i>New Section</i>	<p><b>Proposed Change:</b> New section intended to contribute toward improved sustainability through the use of green and sustainable site development measures in the Downtown. All new development would be required to meet a minimum Green Sustainability Factor score that is equivalent to 30% of a parcel with green or sustainable elements.</p> <p><b>Environmental Analysis:</b> The likely impact of this new section would be beneficial to the natural and built environment; no adverse impacts are anticipated. This section is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.</p>

*\*Recommended Downtown Land Use Code may include revisions in addition to those in the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Wins Code Amendments.*

## Topics

## Proposed Change and Environmental Analysis

### Section 20.25A.130

Mechanical Equipment Screening & Location Standards

*Moved from 20.25A.045*

*Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments\**

**Proposed Change:** Amendments were adopted in March 2016 as part of the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments.

**Environmental Analysis:** No significant changes are proposed as part of the current proposal and this section is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.

### Section 20.25A.135

Downtown Neighborhood Specific Standards

*Moved from 20.25A.065 and 20.25A.070*

**Proposed Change:** The proposed changes are primarily organizational.

**Environmental Analysis:** The proposal is unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment. This section is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.

### Section 20.25A.140

Downtown Design Guidelines Introduction

*New Section*

**Proposed Change:** New sections provide guidance for the relationship of development sites to the surrounding area, organization of improvements within a development site, streetscape and public spaces, and tower design.

**Environmental Analysis:** Potential environmental implications are discussed in the Design Guidelines Issue Paper (Chapter 6).

### Section 20.25A.150

Context

*New Section*

### Section 20.25A.160

Site Organization

*New Section*

### Section 20.25A.170

Streetscape & Public Realm

*New Section*

### Section 20.25A.180

Building Design (Base, Top, Middle)

*New Section*

*\*Recommended Downtown Land Use Code may include revisions in addition to those in the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Wins Code Amendments.*

### *Downtown Transportation Plan Update*

In the City of Bellevue 2011-2012 budget, the City Council approved capital and operating funding to support an update to the Downtown Transportation Plan, and directed the Transportation Commission to develop a comprehensive multimodal mobility strategy to support Downtown growth to 2030, and beyond. The Commission recommendations for transportation system improvements will accommodate the motorized and non-motorized trips generated by a forecast increase of 28,000 jobs and 12,000 residents—representing approximately 75 percent of the planned employment growth in the city, and over 50 percent of the planned residential growth between 2010 and 2030.

To accommodate this growth in a manner that would balance the needs of people using multiple transportation modes, the City began a process to update the Downtown Transportation Plan (DTP) in 2012. A separate but related land use planning process known as the Downtown Livability Initiative was begun in 2013. The Downtown Transportation Plan and the Downtown Livability Initiative address some of the same concerns, such as mobility and access, but each focuses on different aspects of these needs. Their mutual goal is to achieve a downtown that is easy to get around using multiple transportation modes and is accommodating to residents, workers, and visitors alike.

The Downtown Transportation Plan focuses on improvements to roadways/vehicles, transit, pedestrians and bicycles.

## Vehicles and Roadways

The Downtown Transportation Plan (DTP) focuses on the following components of mobility for people in vehicles on Downtown roadways:

- **Downtown access:** roadway network within Downtown
- **Regional and neighborhood access:** connections to and from Downtown
- **Roadway capacity:** roadway function in terms of vehicular delay at intersections and travel time
- **Traffic flow/efficiency:** using technology to manage traffic flow and add system capacity
- **Parking and curbside uses:** including parcel freight loading/unloading, passenger drop-off/pick-up, taxi stands and electric vehicle charging stations

## Transit

In consideration that Bellevue does not operate a transit system, but the City does own, operate and maintain the roadways and intersections upon which transit relies, the DTP focuses on the following four transit system components:

- Transit coverage
- Transit capacity
- Transit speed and reliability
- Transit passenger comfort, access and information

## Pedestrians

The DTP addressed four components of the pedestrian environment:

- Intersections
- Mid-block crossings
- Sidewalks
- Through-block connections

## **Bicycles**

The City completed a Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan in 2009, which identified citywide priority bicycle corridors. North-south corridors are on 108th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE/114th Avenue NE, and east-west corridors are on Main Street and 112th Avenue NE. The DTP identifies the recommended bicycle facilities intended to provide bicycle access throughout the Downtown.

## *Environmental Review*

The purpose of this environmental document is to assist the public and decision-makers in considering the environmental impacts of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update on the built and natural environment.

## *SEPA/GMA Integration*

WAC 197-11-210 authorizes GMA jurisdictions to integrate the requirements of the SEPA and GMA. The goal is to ensure that environmental analysis under SEPA occurs as an integral part of the planning and decision-making process under GMA. Analysis of environmental impacts in the GMA planning process can result in better-informed GMA planning decision as well as avoid delays and duplication.

WAC 197-11-228 states that the appropriate scope and level of detail of environmental review should be tailored to the GMA action under consideration; jurisdictions may modify SEPA phased review as necessary to track the phasing of GMA actions; and the process of integrating SEPA and GMA should begin at the early stages of plan development.

The City of Bellevue has elected to follow an integrated SEPA/GMA process for the Downtown Livability Initiative SEPA document.

### ***Non-Project Environmental Analysis***

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) (RCW 43.21C) requires government officials to consider the environmental consequences of actions they are about to take and seek better or less impacting ways to accomplish those proposed actions. The adoption of comprehensive plans or other long-range planning activities is classified by SEPA as a non-project, or programmatic, action. A non-project action is defined as an action that is broader than a single site-specific project, and involves decisions on policies, plans or programs. SEPA establishes that environmental analysis for a non-project proposal may discuss potential impacts at a level of detail appropriate to the scope and level of planning for the proposal. This environmental document analyzes potential environmental impacts as appropriate to the general nature of this non-project proposal.

### ***Summary of Environmental Implications***

The issue papers contained in Chapter 6 document the environmental analysis of proposed amendments to all applicable sections of the Downtown Land Use Code and Downtown Transportation Plan. Each issue paper provides background information, a review of existing and proposed policy or regulatory changes, and an analysis of potential environmental implications associated with proposed new or amended policies or recommendations. The recommended Downtown Land Use Code and the corresponding issue papers, if applicable, are shown in Table 3. The Transportation Issue Paper addresses proposed changes to the Downtown Transportation Plan.

A summary table that highlights key issues and related SEPA implications is shown at the beginning of each issue paper. Table 4 on the following page is a compilation of these summary tables. For additional information on each of these topics, please consult Chapter 6.

**Table 4** Summary of Key Issues and Environmental Implications

Key Issues	Environmental Implications
<b>Building Height and Form</b>	
Views	<p>Taller buildings could partially obstruct or block some existing views of surrounding mountains, water, the downtown Seattle skyline and the sky from some buildings, open spaces or sidewalks. The degree of change in potential view impacts relative to existing building height would depend on specific locations, design and orientation of future buildings. Neither the current or proposed codes protect private views.</p> <p>Taller high-rise buildings would also increase view opportunities, and could also increase the prominence, variety and attractiveness of Bellevue's skyline.</p>
Sun and Shadow	High-rise buildings can cast or increase shadows on adjacent parks, publically accessible open spaces and pedestrian corridors. Potential impacts are addressed in draft design guidelines and would require mitigation through project design.
Wind	High-rise buildings can channel and accelerate wind conditions at ground level, resulting in discomfort for pedestrians. Potential impacts are addressed in draft design guidelines and would be mitigated for specific projects.
Light and Glare	Lighting of buildings and sites can spill over and effect adjacent sites. Reflective building surfaces and glazing can generate glare to drivers, pedestrians, and building occupants. Potential impacts are addressed in draft design guidelines and would require mitigation through project design.
<b>Amenity Incentive System</b>	
Amenity List	Overall, the proposed amenity incentive system is likely to result in a beneficial or neutral impact on the environment. Individual amenities would encourage pedestrian mobility, increased open space, new community and cultural facilities, and sustainability certification, all of which are associated with beneficial impacts.
Incentive System	The incentive system itself would not generate direct adverse or beneficial environmental impacts. However, it could indirectly result in increased development of amenities and more intensive development in taller and larger buildings in the Downtown. These potential impacts are discussed in other sections of the Amenity Incentive System Issue Paper. No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated.
Building Height and Form	Implementation of the Amenity Incentive System would result in increased building height and FAR in applicable downtown zoning districts. Please see the discussion of potential impacts associated with increased height and FAR in the Building Height and Form Issue Paper.

## Key Issues

## Environmental Implications

## Design Guidelines

Downtown Design Guidelines	<p>Overall, environmental impacts of the proposed design guidelines are likely to be beneficial or neutral. Proposed guidelines would protect and enhance the aesthetics through architectural design measures; promote the character and usability of open space through open space design measures; continue to enhance pedestrian mobility and a pedestrian-friendly environment in the Downtown; and seek to minimize negative visual and operational impacts of on-site service uses and parking circulation.</p> <p>Compared to the existing code, the proposed code provides relatively less guidance for protection of view corridors from public places. It is anticipated that the City's substantive authority under SEPA, consistent with existing Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Subarea Plan policies would continue to be used to protect valued public views where appropriate during project-level review.</p>
Design Departure Process	<p>If adopted, this new procedural process would not result in direct environmental impacts. The potential for indirect impacts could be positive, neutral or negative depending on the nature of the application and findings of the review process. The potential impacts of a proposed departure from standards or guidelines would be evaluated as part of the project-level SEPA review and appropriate mitigation, if needed, could be applied.</p>

## Transportation

Vehicles and Roadways	<p>Average vehicle delay will increase in the PM peak hour compared to existing conditions, but there will be less of an increase with adoption of the proposed Land Use Code Amendments and no significant environmental implications are anticipated.</p> <p>Recommended changes in on-street parking and curbside load zones would provide additional parking supply and vehicle-based services to support Downtown residents and businesses. Potential impacts on traffic and non-motorized uses would be addressed on a project-specific basis and related project-level environmental review.</p>
Transit	<p>Recommended improvements in transit coverage, capacity, speed and reliability would improve Downtown mobility and encourage transit ridership. Potential impacts, if any, on non-transit traffic would be addressed in future corridor studies and associated environmental review.</p>
Pedestrians	<p>Recommended pedestrian facility improvements would enhance Downtown pedestrian mobility. Potential benefits to pedestrians and impacts to traffic flow of mid-block crossings would be assessed on a project-specific basis and related project-level environmental review.</p>
Bicycles	<p>Recommended bicycle facility improvements would enhance Downtown bicycle mobility. Bicycle-specific improvements, such as sharrows, protected lanes and green lanes would enhance access and safety for bicyclists, but could impact traffic operations on roadways where they are implemented. Impacts would be assessed through corridor studies or on a project-specific basis and associated environmental review.</p>





# 3

## Proposal Overview

This chapter provides a description of the proposal, a review of the planning and policy framework that guides the proposal and an overview of the guidance for the SEPA environmental review process.

### *Description of the Proposal*

The proposed action includes two major elements:

1. An update of the Downtown Land Use Code consistent with the vision set forth in the existing Downtown Subarea Plan and by the Project Principles approved by the City Council on January 22, 2013 (see Table 1 in Chapter 1).
2. An update of the Downtown Transportation Plan, intended to develop a comprehensive future mobility strategy to support Downtown growth to 2030 and beyond and consistent with the Project Principles approved by the City Council on February 6, 2012 (see Table 2 in Chapter 1). Topics addressed in the recommended Downtown Transportation Plan include:
  - a. Roadways/vehicles
  - b. Transit
  - c. Pedestrians
  - d. Bicycles

A description of the proposed amendments to the Downtown Land Use Code and the Downtown Transportation Plan is provided below.

### *Land Use Code Amendments*

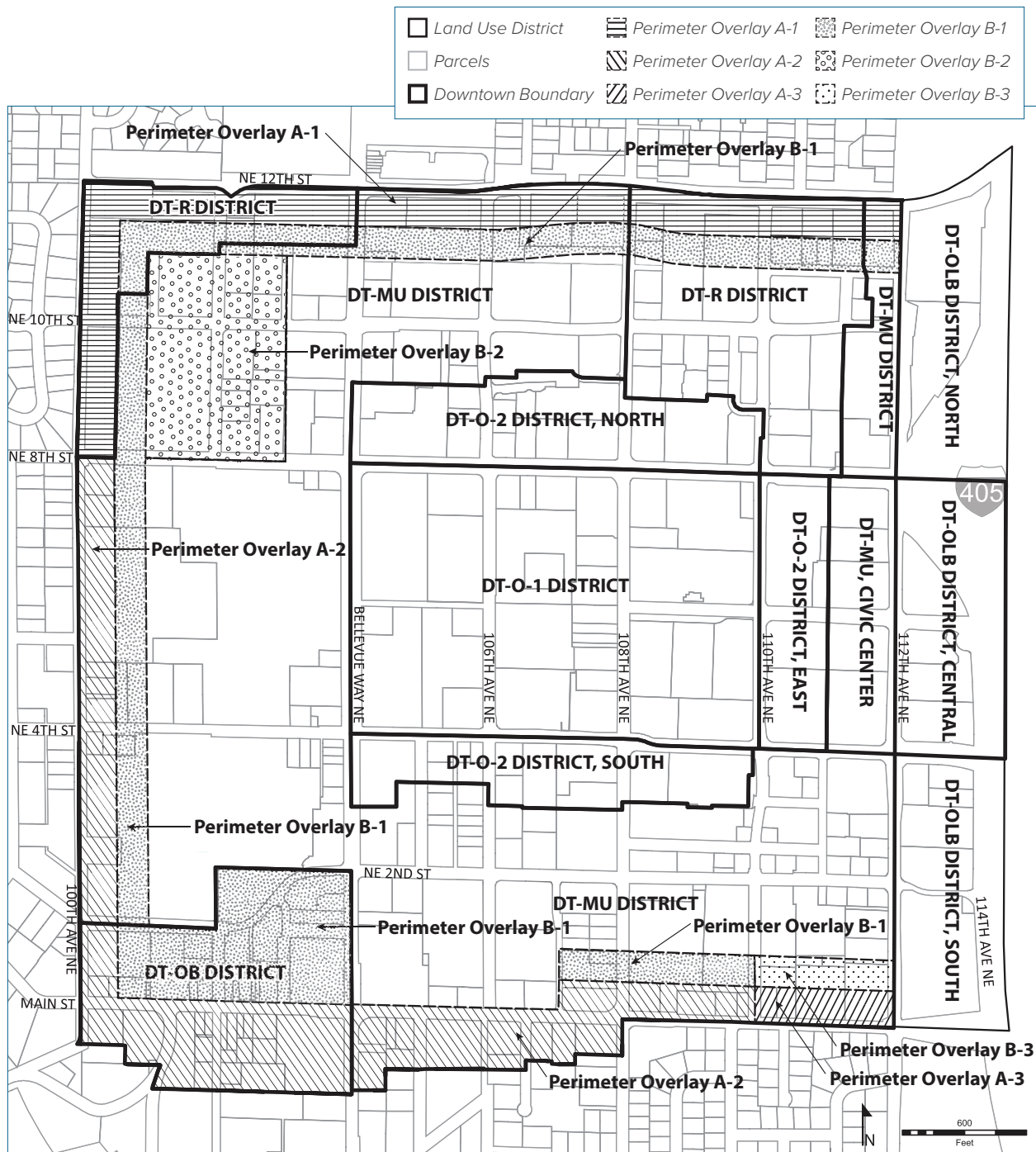
The proposed Land Use Code action consists of a set of targeted and integrated code amendments addressing a range of topics. The recommendations are part of the Downtown Livability Initiative, a city initiative to make the Downtown more people-friendly, vibrant and memorable and to add to the amenities that make for a great city center. See the Background and Planning Framework discussion in this section for additional context on the Downtown Livability Initiative.

The full proposed code amendment package is shown in Appendix 1 and summarized below.

#### **Section 20.25A.010 General**

This new introductory section has been re-organized for ease of use and amended as discussed below.

- A. Part A establishes that LUC Part 20.25A applies to development and activity within the Downtown land use districts. It also describes how this section relates to other regulations and what sections of the Land Use Code are not applicable in Downtown.
- B. Part B describes the purpose and organization of Part 20.25A, including land use district classifications, perimeter overlay districts, neighborhood design districts, right-of-way designations, and major pedestrian corridor.
  - **Land Use District Classifications** describes the classifications applied to each parcel of land in Downtown that determine uses, dimensional requirements, and requirements for participation in the amenity incentive system. No substantive changes land use district classifications are proposed (see Figure 2).
  - **Perimeter Overlay Districts** would amend the existing Perimeter Design Districts currently described in LUC Section 20.25A.090. The existing Perimeter Design District is composed of three subdistricts (A through C) and is intended to establish a stable development program for the

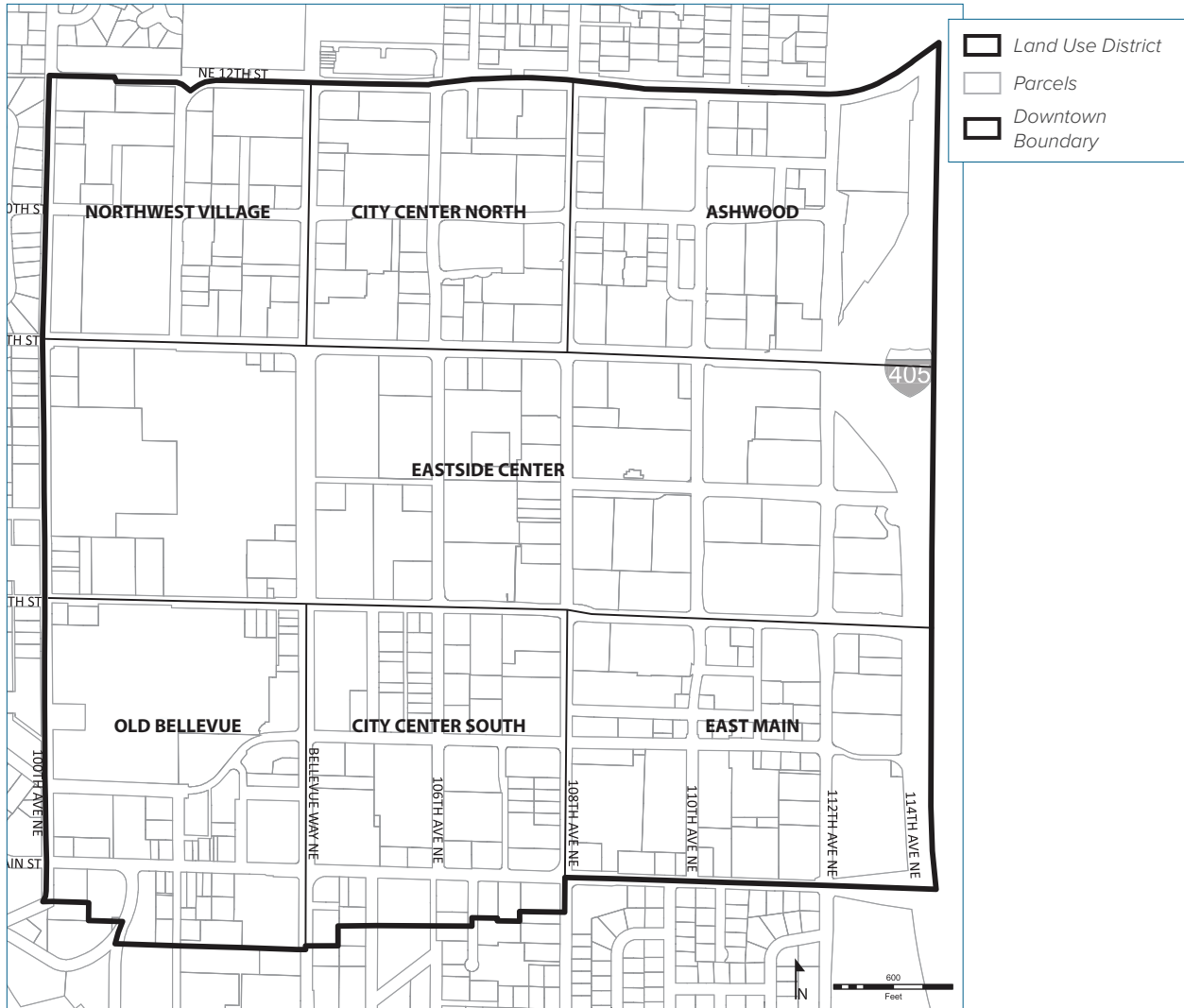


**Figure 2** Land Use Classifications and Perimeter Overlay Districts

Source: City of Bellevue

perimeter between the Downtown and adjacent residential neighborhoods. The proposed Perimeter Overlay Districts would retain this same purpose, but would make the following changes:

- » Consolidate the area covered by existing Districts A–C into two districts, as shown in Figure 2,
  - » Change the district name and make minor changes to internal district boundaries, and
  - » Amend and reorganize district requirements.
- **Neighborhood Design Districts.** Consistent with the designations and guidance in the Downtown Subarea Plan of the Comprehensive Plan, Neighborhood Design Districts are proposed. Neighborhood Design Districts are intended to create a series of distinct mixed use neighborhoods that reinforce their unique identities, see Figure 3.
    - » Northwest Village
    - » City Center North
    - » Ashwood
    - » Eastside Center (Bellevue Square, City Center and Convention Civic)
    - » Old Bellevue
    - » City Center South
    - » East Main
  - **Right-of-Way Designations.** Proposed new right-of-way designations would provide design guidelines for Downtown streets organized by streetscape type. Proposed new designations create a hierarchy of rights-of-way reflecting the intensity of pedestrian activity, listed below. Category “A” rights-of-way would have the highest expected amount of pedestrian activity and Category “E” rights-of-way the least amount of pedestrian activity.
    - A. Pedestrian Corridor/High Streets
    - B. Commercial Streets
    - C. Mixed Streets
    - D. Neighborhood Streets
    - E. Perimeter Streets



**Figure 3** Neighborhood Design Districts

Source: City of Bellevue

Proposed right-of-way designations are shown in Figure 4 and standards for these streets are described in proposed LUC Section 20.25A.170.

- **Pedestrian Corridor.** An extension of the Pedestrian Corridor from 102nd Avenue NE east to 112th Avenue NE was adopted in March 2016 as part of the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments. No additional change is proposed to the definition of the Pedestrian Corridor is proposed.

#### **Section 20.25A.020 Definitions**

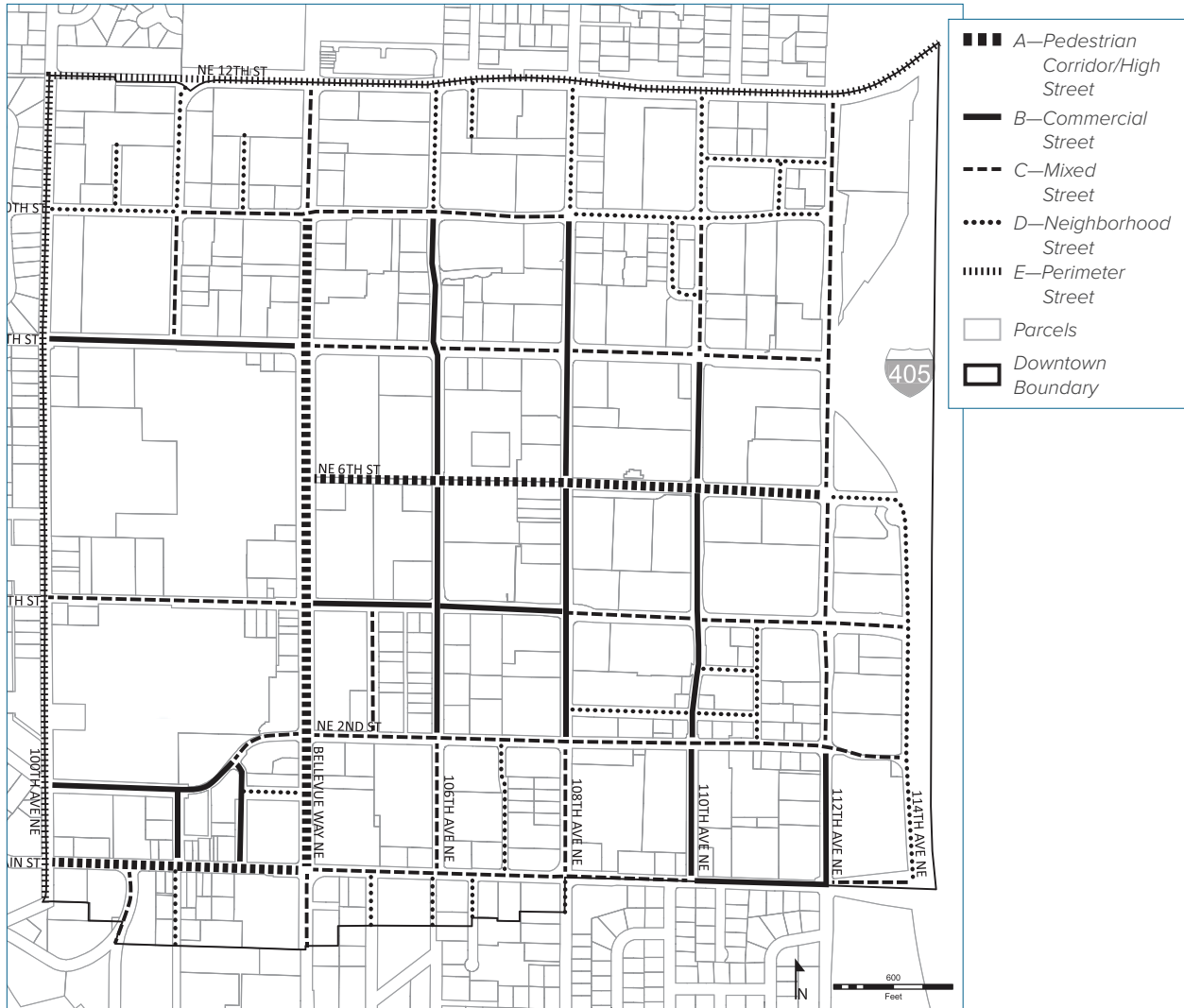
- Proposed new section establishing definitions specific to Downtown, as well as referencing other general definitions not specifically applicable to Downtown.

#### **Section 20.25A.030 Application Review**

- Moved from 20.25A.010 and expanded.
- Proposed amendments describe the regulatory framework for downtown development review, including master development plan and design review procedures, and administrative procedures to allow concurrent review of administrative land use permits.
- Proposed amendments include a new administrative process to modify provisions of the Land Use Code when strict application of regulations would not fully achieve the vision for livability articulated in the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Subarea Plan (LUC 20.25A.030.D). This proposed change is further described and discussed in Chapter 6, Design Guidelines Issue Paper.

#### **Section 20.25A.040 Nonconforming Uses, Structures and Sites**

- Moved from 20.25A.025
- Proposed amendments would correct internal references, streamline and simplify the review process for nonconforming use expansions, and allow nonconforming structures that are destroyed to be rebuilt consistent with its nonconformity.



**Figure 4** Proposed Right-of-Way Designations

Source: City of Bellevue

### Section 20.25A.050 Downtown Land Use Charts

- Moved from 20.25A.015
- Minor amendments include updated citations in the transportation and utilities use zone chart notes and a new residential use zone chart note regarding the Senior Congregate Care Center use in the DNTN-O-2 zone.



### **Section 20.25A.060 Dimensional Charts**

- Moved from 20.25A.020.A.2
- The proposed amendments would change dimensional requirements in several of the downtown zones and Perimeter Overlay Districts, and provide for modifications to setbacks and stepbacks and height exceptions. See Chapter 6, Building Height and Form Issue Paper, for a summary and discussion of proposed changes to dimensional standards.

### **Section 20.25A.070 FAR/Amenity Incentive System**

- Moved from 20.25A.030
- Proposed changes to the amenities that could be provided in order to receive bonus FAR and height.
- Proposed changes to the model for calculating the exchange rate between amenities and the amount of bonus FAR and height that accrue to a development.
- See Chapter 6, Amenity Incentive System Issue Paper, for a summary and discussion of proposed changes.

### **Section 20.25A.080 Parking Standards**

- Moved from 20.25A.050
- Proposed amendments include:
  - » Delete outdated references.
  - » Amend to require screening from above for parking structures.
  - » Added authority for Director to increase or reduce required parking based on parking demand studies
  - » Increase the vehicle clearance heights for entries to parking garages to accommodate accessible van parking.
  - » Add requirement for residential visitor parking
  - » Add requirements for bicycle parking

**Section 20.25A.090 Street and Pedestrian Circulation Standards**

- Standards for sidewalk widths, planter strips and tree pits standards moved from 20.25A.060; new standards for sidewalk widths added; other sections carried forward from the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments.
- Downtown Core standards moved from 20.25A.090.E and citations updated.

**Section 20.25A.100 Downtown Pedestrian Bridges**

- Moved from 20.25A.130
- Amended to include reference to the new Development Agreement Process.

**Section 20.25A.110 Landscape Development**

- Street tree plan and landscaping standards moved from 20.25A.060 and amended to allow flexibility to changes species if needed in response to disease or pest infestation;
- On-site landscaping moved from 20.25A.040 and outdated reference deleted
- Standards for linear buffer standards moved from 20.25A.090.D.4 and amended to allow property owners more use of the buffers.

**Section 20.25A.120 Green and Sustainability Factor**

- A proposed new green and sustainability factor is intended to increase the use of green and sustainable elements and contribute toward improved sustainability in the Downtown.
- A development's Green and Sustainability Factor would be calculated through a scoring system. A menu of options would provide flexibility by project and would include credit for measures under the following categories: landscape elements, green roofs, green walls, landscape bonuses, permeable paving, and bicycle parking.
- All new development would be required to meet a minimum Green Sustainability Factor score that requires the equivalent of 30% of a parcel with green or sustainable elements.

### **Section 20.25A.130 Mechanical Equipment Screening and Location Standards**

- Section moved from 20.25.045
- Amendments were adopted under the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments. No additional amendments are proposed.

### **Section 20.25A.135 Downtown Neighborhood Specific Standards**

- Moved from 20.25A.065 and .070
- Provides area-specific standards for the Convention Civic and Old Bellevue neighborhoods
- Amendments to avoid redundancy

### **Section 20.25A.140 Downtown Design Guidelines Introduction**

- New section identifies the goals of the Downtown Design Guidelines.
- See Chapter 6, Design Guidelines Issue Paper, for a summary and discussion of proposed changes to Sections 20.25A.140 through .180.

### **Section 20.25A.150 Context**

- New section describes the context for downtown design guidelines including the relationship of height and form to other development; relationship to publicly accessible open spaces and transportation elements; use of architectural elements to emphasize gateways; and how to maximize sunlight on surrounding area. Proposed guidelines for each of these topics are described.

### **Section 20.25A.160 Site Organization**

- New section describes that the majority of the Downtown has a 600-foot superblock configuration, providing for flexibility in site design and the need for street activation and coordinated internal circulation. See Figure 5 for through-block connections.



**Figure 5** Through-block Connections

Source: City of Bellevue

- Guidelines for on-site circulation, building entrances, through-block pedestrian connections, open space are proposed. Guidelines for through-block pedestrian connections include text moved from LUC 20.25A.060 and the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments.

### **Section 20.25A.170 Streetscape and Public Realm**

- New streetscape section includes guidelines that address the following goals:
  - » Define the pedestrian environment, intended to provide a continuous, visually rich pedestrian experience
  - » Protect pedestrians from the elements, including wind, sun and rain
  - » Create a variety of outdoor spaces, providing comfortable and inviting outdoor spaces during all hours and seasons
  - » Provide places for stopping and viewing, including seating and resting places
  - » Integrate artistic elements, complementing the character of a site, building or district as a whole
  - » Orient light toward sidewalks and public spaces, highlighting sidewalks, street trees and other features
  - » Orient hanging and blade signs to pedestrians
- New right-of-way designations section provides design guidelines for streets organized by downtown streets. The guidelines are intended to provide activity, enclosure, and protection of the sidewalk for the pedestrian. Five categories of rights-of-way are identified according to categories A–E, with A representing those streets expected to have the highest amount of pedestrian activity and decreasing intensity of pedestrian activity for each category, as listed below and shown in Figure 4.
  - » Pedestrian Corridor/High Streets—A Rights-of-Way
  - » Commercial Streets—B Rights-of-Way
  - » Mixed Streets—C Rights-of-Way
  - » Neighborhood Streets—D Rights-of-Way
  - » Perimeter Streets—E Rights-of-Way

- Proposed amendments contain design guidelines for each category of right-of-way.
- Alleys with Addresses. New section states that alleys with addresses act as active through-block connections and are faced with a mix of retail activity and residential uses. Alleys with addresses are intended to have a high orientation to pedestrians with any vehicular activity being secondary to pedestrians. Design guidelines and standards to support this intent are proposed.
- Upper Level Retail. New section states that upper level retail is intended to activate the ground-level pedestrian environment, and should be designed and managed to draw the attention and interest of the pedestrian to the upper level and to increase opportunities for interaction and movement between the ground and upper levels. Design guidelines and standards for upper level retail are proposed.

#### **Section 20.25A.180 Building Design (Base, Middle and Top)**

- New section states that a tall building should consist of three carefully integrated parts: a building base, middle and top. Design guidelines for the following topics are proposed:
  - » Overall building design
  - » Building base (podium)
  - » Middle (tower)
  - » Top

## *Downtown Transportation Plan*

The Downtown Transportation Plan (DTP) focuses on improvements to roadways/vehicles, transit, pedestrians and bicycles. Each topic is briefly summarized below and further discussed in Chapter 6, Transportation Issue Paper.

### **Vehicles and Roadways**

The DTP focuses on the following components of mobility for people in vehicles on Downtown roadways:

- **Downtown access:** roadway network within Downtown
- **Regional and neighborhood access:** connections to and from Downtown
- **Roadway capacity:** roadway function in terms of vehicular delay at intersections and travel time
- **Traffic flow/efficiency:** using technology to manage traffic flow and add system capacity
- **Parking and curbside uses:** including parcel freight loading/unloading, passenger drop-off/pick-up, taxi stands and electric vehicle charging stations

Between 1990 and 2013, the number of **vehicle trips in Downtown Bellevue remained relatively constant**, despite substantial growth in jobs and population.

### *Level-of-Service (LOS)*

LOS standards are measures set by the City to ensure quality public services, such as transportation.

The adopted intersection level-of service standard for Downtown Bellevue requires an average intersection LOS of E+, which roughly translates to a delay of less than 80 seconds. The average delay was 27 seconds in 2010.

Proposed projects and recommendations in the DTP are compared against modeling of future projected traffic levels from the Dynameq model, which assumes planned and funded changes to the transportation network (see text box at right). In this text box, “Baseline Scenario” projects are those that had substantial funding commitments in 2010 by state, regional and local agencies, plus other projects that were reasonably foreseeable at the time. Other projects that had advanced through the planning process in terms of both design and funding commitments to the point where they can be considered reasonably foreseeable are included under the “Build Scenario.” All of these projects were either under construction or were expected to be constructed by 2030 and, as such, all projects are included in the Baseline Scenario for the purposes of this section.

Based on the modeling results, the DTP determined that all but one intersection would meet the city’s level of service (LOS) standard

## Reasonably Foreseeable Planned Future Roadway and Transit Capacity Projects

### Baseline Scenario

**East Link Light Rail:** Light rail between Seattle and Redmond through Bellevue, with a station in Downtown Bellevue

**RapidRide B:** Bus rapid transit between Downtown Bellevue and Downtown Redmond

**NE 2nd Street:** Widen to five lanes between Bellevue Way and 112th Ave NE

**110th Avenue NE:** Widen to five lanes between NE 6th St and NE 8th St

**NE 4th Street:** Extend from 116th Ave NE to 120th Ave NE

**NE 6th Street:** Extend across I-405 from the center HOV direct access ramps to 120th Ave NE

**120th Avenue NE:** Widen to five lanes between NE 4th St and NE 15th St

**124th Avenue NE:** Widen between NE 8th St and NE 15th St

**NE 15th/16th Street (Spring Boulevard):** New roadway segments in the BelRed Subarea

**Bellevue Way SE:** One high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane southbound from 112th Ave SE to the South Bellevue Park & Ride to align with the planned southbound HOV land between the park and ride and I-90

### Build Scenario

**SR 520:** New ramps to/from east at 124th Ave NE to complete the interchange

**SR 520:** Eastbound slip ramp under 148th Ave NE to connect to 152nd Ave NE and the Overlake Village area in Redmond

**I-405:** Southbound braid from SR 520 to NE 10th St

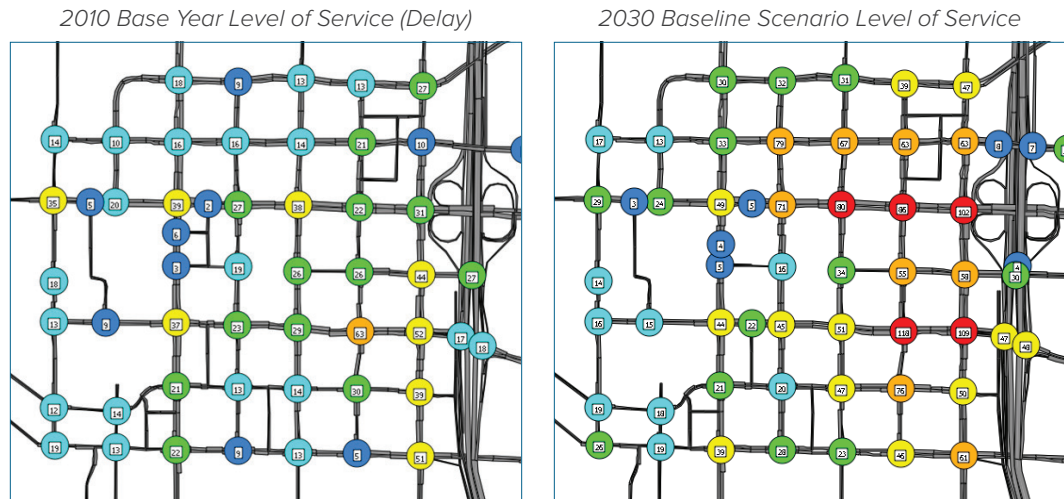
**I-405:** One auxiliary lane (collector/distributor) each direction, between SE 8th St and SR 520; the portion north of Main St will be accomplished through restriping, not additional widening

of E+ for Downtown intersections and that adding general purpose vehicular capacity beyond the baseline scenario would not be needed to accommodate 2030 projected growth. The modeling showed that some intersections may approach a level of congestion that would require operational or capacity modifications, but that implementation of coordinated and adaptive signal system



**Figure 6** Existing and Future 2030 LOS (Average Vehicle Delay at Intersections) in Downtown Bellevue

0-10    35-55  
 10-20    55-80  
 20-35    80-inf  
 Note: avgdelay



Source: City of Bellevue

technology (Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System or SCATS) has been effective at optimizing the available capacity of the roadway system while also better accommodating the needs of pedestrians and transit (see Figure 6).

#### *Parking and Curbside Uses*

The DTP evaluated on-street parking and other uses for curbside space, including parcel/freight loading/unloading, passenger drop-off/pick-up, taxi stands and electric vehicle charging stations. Recommended types of projects include:

- Providing additional on-street parking at high-opportunity locations; and evaluating additional parking in moderate opportunity locations
- Installing parking meters for pay parking
- Designating new passenger drop-off/pick-up areas/loading zones
- Accommodating temporary taxi stand use along the curb during evenings and weekends
- Installing electric vehicle charging stations

## Transit

In consideration that Bellevue does not operate a transit system, but the City does own, operate and maintain the roadways and intersections upon which transit relies, the DTP focuses on the following four transit system components:

- Transit coverage
- Transit capacity
- Transit speed and reliability
- Transit passenger comfort, access and information

To improve upon anticipated **transit coverage** of 97 percent in 2030, proposed amendments to the plan recommend:

- Modifying existing or future transit routes to better serve the northwest and southeast quadrants of Downtown
- Providing a successor to the Sound Transit 550 route to serve the southwest quadrant when East Link begins operations in 2023
- Providing a route with frequent service on 116th Avenue NE to serve local hospitals

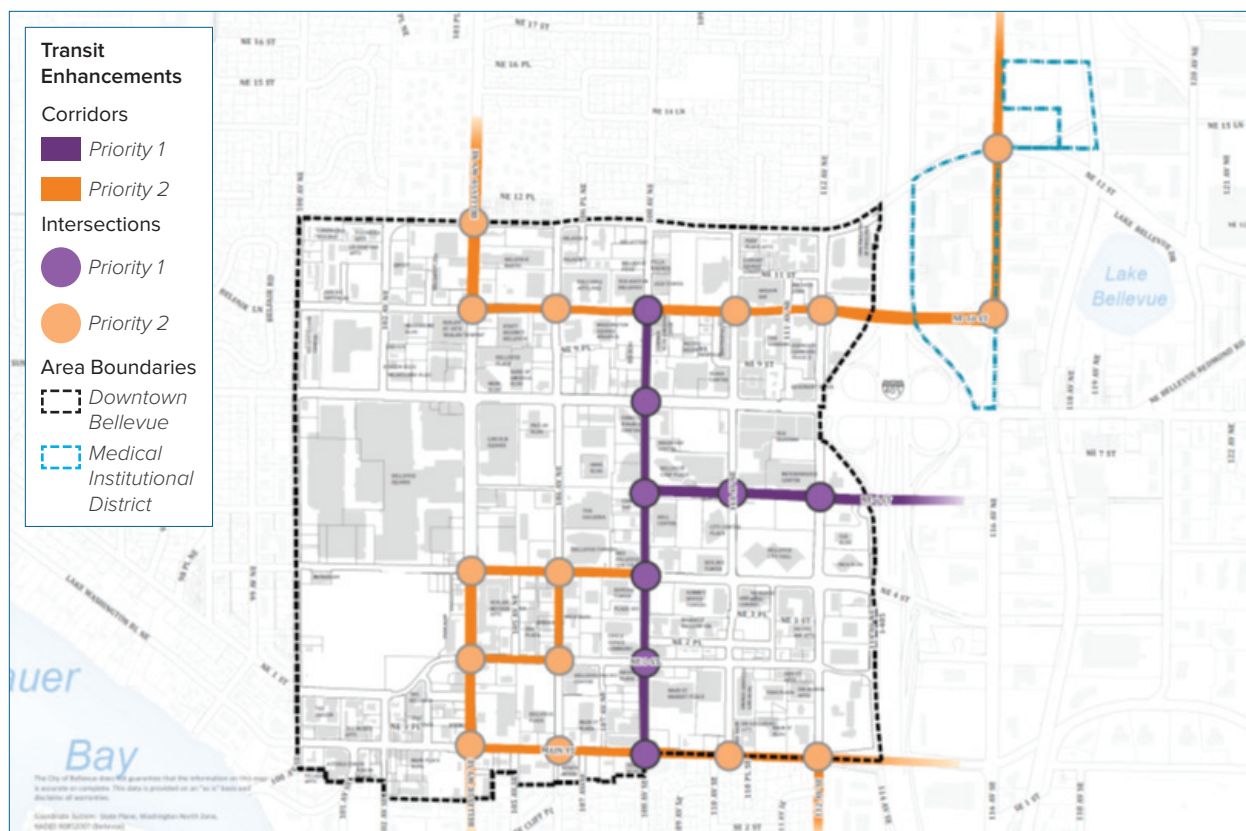
The number of transit trips (boardings and alightings) is projected to increase almost five fold by 2030, from 10,000 to 57,000. The DTP identifies the infrastructure needed to accommodate these trips, while the Bellevue Transit Master Plan (2014) addresses how to provide service to these riders. Proposed amendments to the DTP recommendations for **transit capacity** include:

- Articulate policy support and advocacy for sustained and enhanced transit service
- Design modifications to improve the function and flow of the passenger platform of BTC

### *What is Transit Coverage?*

Transit coverage, for purposes of the Downtown Transportation Plan, is the percent of Downtown residents and employees who live or work in a Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) that is within 600 feet of a bus stop with frequent service or a light rail station. A TAZ is generally a Downtown “superblock” that is 600 feet wide, so the transit coverage geography is the area within about 1,200 feet of a stop/station.

Currently, Downtown Bellevue has transit coverage of 86 percent (2010). With planned improvements, this is expected to increase to 97 percent in 2030.



**Figure 7** 2030 Transit Priority Corridor and Intersections

*Note: Priority 1 Transit Corridors have greater than 90 bus trips in the PM peak hour, while Priority 2 Transit Corridors have more 15 or more bus trips in the PM peak hour. Priority 1 Intersections are those located along a Priority 1 Transit Corridor, while Priority 2 Intersections are those located along Priority 2 Transit Corridors.*

*Source: City of Bellevue*

To address **transit speed and reliability**, Bellevue may invest in capital improvements or perform traffic operation changes to benefit transit passengers and overall mobility. The DTP identifies a hierarchy of transit priority corridors and intersections (see Figure 7) where the following types of improvements could be made to improve speed and reliability:

- Transit priority lanes
- Peak hour transit-only lanes
- Bus/bicycle lanes
- In-lane bus stops
- Business access and transit (BAT) lanes
- Transit signal priority
- Improvements to pedestrian environment
- Transit stop consolidation
- Off-board fare payment

To support potential improvements to passenger amenities related to **comfort, access and information**, the DTP recommends a set of transit stop “typologies” to categorize transit stops and identifies a suite of components that may be integrated into each type of transit stop and its vicinity. These four typologies and recommended components are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5** Transit Stop/Station Typologies, Components and Access

Typology	Definition	Facilities/Amenities	Access
<b>Local Transit Stop</b>	Served by single transit route; 30 or less boardings per weekday	Pole-mounted bus stop sign, ADA standard landing pad with sidewalk access, bench, or shelter	Access to nearby neighborhoods with pedestrian and bike facilities
<b>Primary Transit Stop</b>	Served by one or more transit routes with combined headways of 30 minutes or better; average weekday boardings of 30 to 100 passengers	Passenger shelter, transit route map and transfer wayfinding, real-time information displays, trash receptacle, security lighting, and short-term bicycle parking	Enhanced intersection components, nearby mid-block crossings, and neighborhood wayfinding
<b>Frequent Transit Network/ RapidRide Station</b>	Served primarily by RapidRide B, but may also be shared with other frequent transit network routes; average weekday boardings of 100 to 1,000	Includes Primary Transit Stop facilities, sheltered or enclosed waiting area, ORCA card vending machine, and off-board fare payment	Enhanced or exceptional intersection components, nearby mid-block crossings, and neighborhood wayfinding
<b>Transit Center/ Downtown Multimodal Center</b>	Served by multiple transit routes and modes with a constant flow of vehicles during the day; average weekday boardings greater than 1,000	Includes Primary Transit Stop and Frequent Transit Station facilities and possibly rest rooms, “bike station” facilities and covered/secure long-term/commuter bicycle parking	Exceptional intersection components; on-street bicycle facilities provide access from neighborhoods and regional facilities

ADA = Americans with Disabilities Act

ORCA = One Regional Card of All

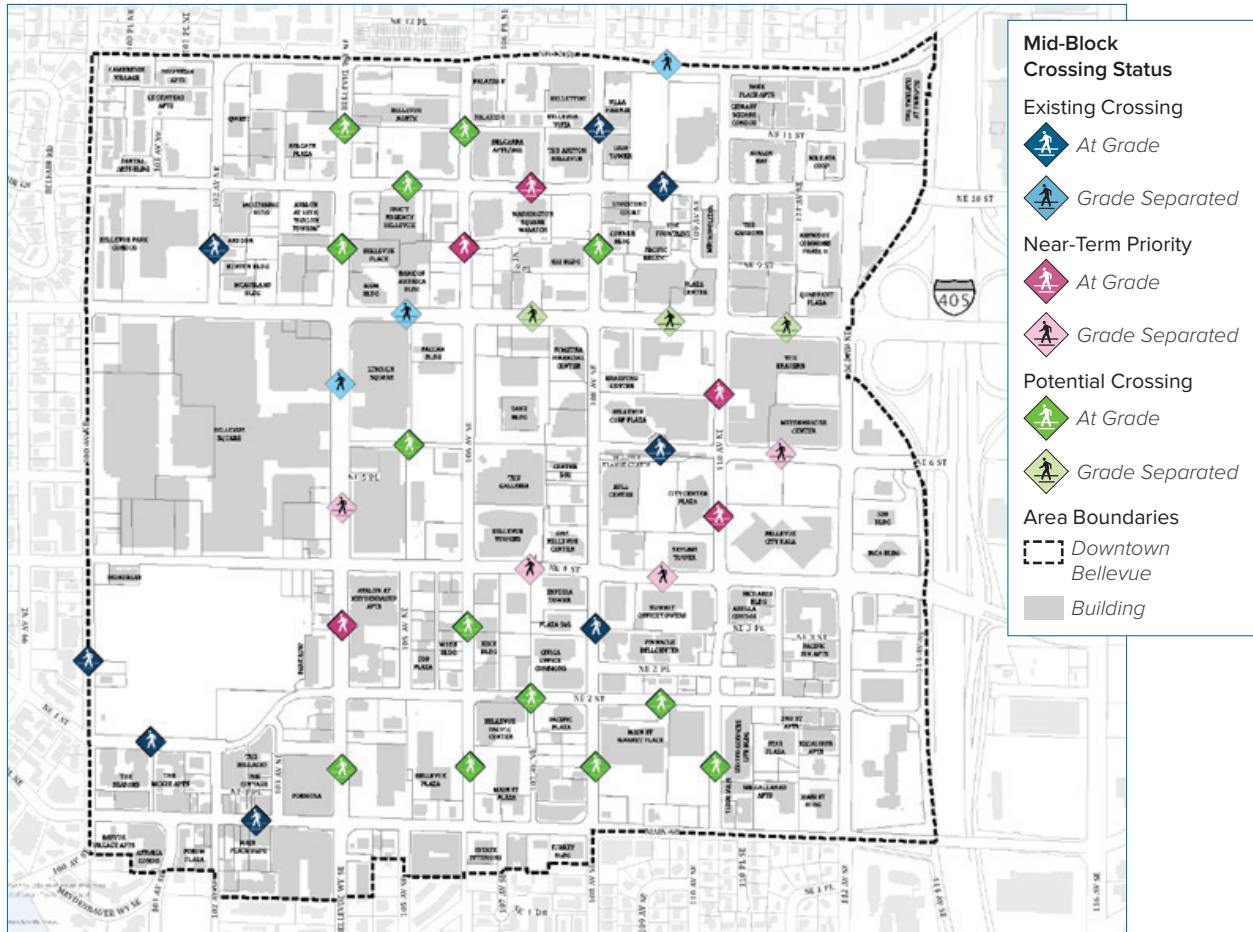
## Pedestrians

The DTP focuses on four components of the pedestrian environment:

- Intersections
- Mid-block crossings
- Sidewalks
- Through-block connections

The DTP recommends three types of **intersection** treatments: Standard, Enhanced and Exceptional. Standard intersections are the most common, with pavement striping spaced 8-feet apart and pedestrian actuated signals. Enhanced intersections are wider than standard to accommodate higher numbers of pedestrians and provide separation from vehicles, and may include wayfinding and freestanding weather protection at corners, special pavement treatment or striping across the street, and curb bump outs or tighter radius to shorten the crossing distance, calm traffic and provide pedestrian queuing areas. Exceptional intersections may incorporate components of Enhanced intersections, and may also include a pedestrian scramble signal phase, raised crossings, and landmark freestanding wayfinding. Intersections identified as Exceptional include those along the Pedestrian Corridor (NE 6th Street at 110th Avenue NE, 108th Avenue NE, 106th Avenue NE and Bellevue Way), in Old Bellevue across Main Street, and at the 102nd Avenue NE and NE 1st Street entrance to the Downtown Park.

The locations of **mid-block** crossings recommended in the DTP are shown in Figure 8. These crossings could include full signalization, warning beacons, median islands or grade-separated pedestrian bridges. The City Council has approved the location of several pedestrian bridges already, including across Bellevue Way, NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street, and the DTP recommends additional locations, including across NE 6th Street between the City Hall Plaza/ future East Link light rail station and Meydenbauer Center. The DTP provides recommendations on signalization, signage, crosswalk markings and medians and planters.



**Figure 8** Existing and Recommended Future Mid-Block Crossings

Source: City of Bellevue

The Downtown Land Use Code prescribes the width of **sidewalks** and landscaping treatment adjacent to the street. Both the private and public sector are responsible for implementing these provisions in new projects. The DTP recommends a land use code amendment to increase the required width of the sidewalk along certain heavily travelled street segments (such as 106th Avenue NE) from 12 to 16 feet to accommodate more pedestrians, window shoppers and café



seating. Wider sidewalk consistent with this recommendation were previously approved as part of the Downtown Livability Early Wins code amendments (LUC 20.25A.090).

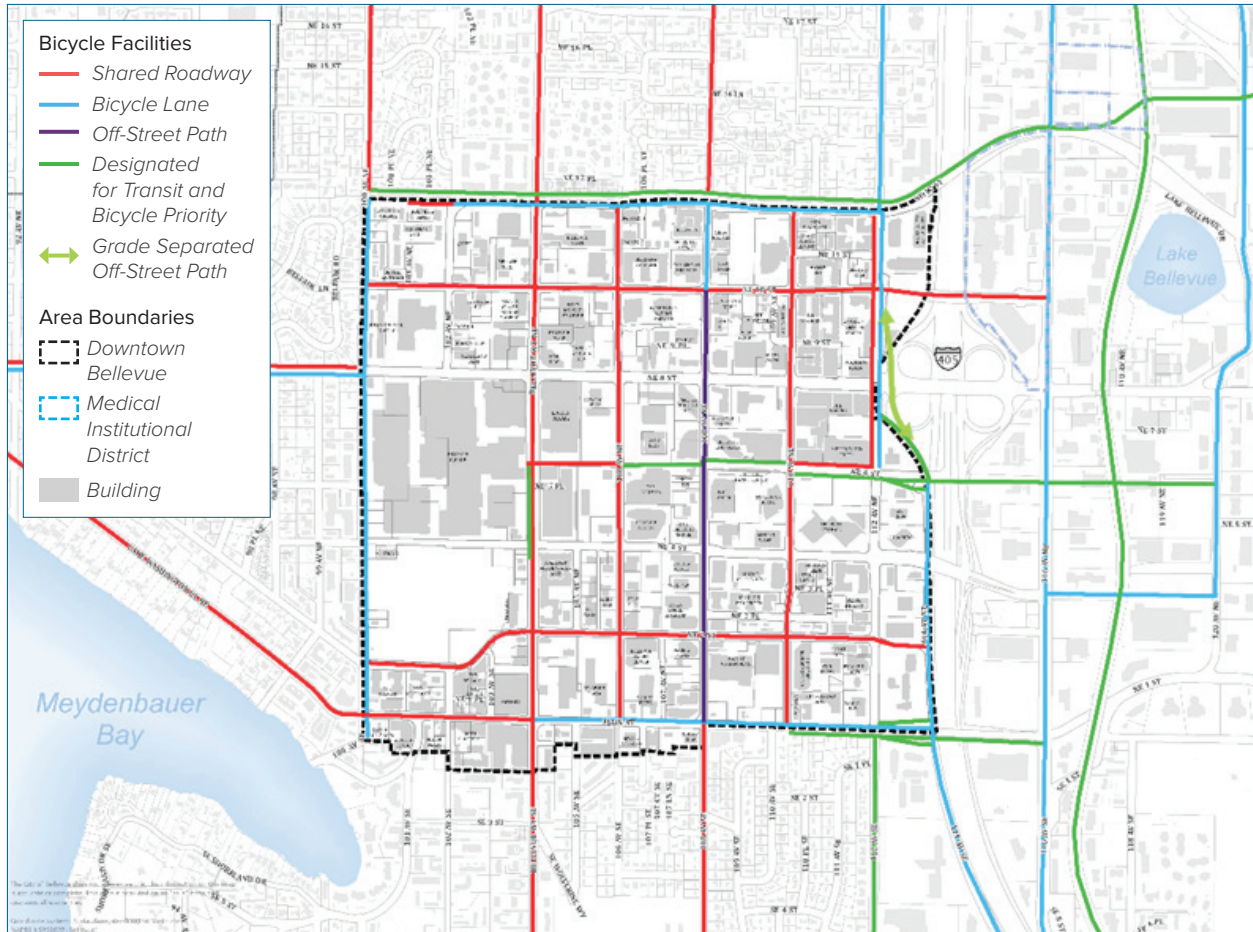
To address inconsistent and unclear **through-block connections**, the DTP recommends certain design refinements—such as standard public access wayfinding, commonly recognizable paving materials or inlays, and universal accessibility according to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. These recommendations are addressed in recommended design guidelines for through-block connections found in LUC 20.25A.160.D, see Appendix 1.

In addition to these four components, the DTP recommends design considerations for the **Pedestrian Corridor**—located along NE 6th Street between Bellevue Way and 112th Avenue NE—to improve accommodations for bicyclists without intimidating pedestrians, such as integrating special paving and wayfinding. The Downtown Livability Initiative code review identifies specific code-related strategies for implementing these design improvements to the Pedestrian Corridor. Proposed land use code amendments for Pedestrian Corridor design can be found in LUC 20.25A.090.C.1 and 20.25.A.170.B.1, see Appendix 1.

## Bicycles

The City completed a Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan in 2009, which identified citywide priority bicycle corridors. North-south corridors are on 108th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE/114th Avenue NE, and east-west corridors are on Main Street and NE 12th Street. Figure 9 shows the recommended bicycle facilities intended to provide bicycle access throughout the Downtown.

The DTP recommends implementing new tools and providing a robust bicycle wayfinding system. Bicycle facility recommendations include east-west corridor improvements on Main Street and NE 12th Street, and north-south corridor improvements on 100th Avenue



**Figure 9** Downtown Bellevue Bicycle Facilities  
Source: City of Bellevue

NE and 114th Avenue NE/112th Avenue NE. Corridor analyses for these roadways will be used to determine what types of facilities are needed for all users to safely and comfortably share these roadways. The DTP also recommends a pedestrian and bicycle overpass across NE 8th Street along with improving bicycle facilities along portions of the NE 6th Street Pedestrian Corridor.



Specific types of improvements could include:

- **Shared lane marking (sharrows):** a painted marking in a travel lane to indicate the presence of bicycles, provide wayfinding guidance, and mark the suggested position for bicycles in the lane
- **Protected bicycle lane:** a one-way or two-way bicycle lane physically separated from moving traffic by a painted or physical buffer
- **Green bicycle lane:** a bicycle lane that is painted green along the full length or at potential traffic conflict points
- **Green bike box:** location at an intersection that is painted green to indicate the preferred location for bicyclists to wait for a signal change

The DTP also recommends a land use code amendment requiring or incentivizing new development to include onsite long-term/commuter bicycle parking, together with lockers and showers. Recommended amendments to LUC 20.25A.080 include new requirements for the number of bicycle parking spaces; provision of bicycle lockers are included as an option through the proposed Green and Sustainability Factor (LUC 20.25A.120), see Appendix 1.

To improve access to the two planned East Link light rail stations to serve Downtown, the DTP recommends the use of special pavers and signage to make access more intuitive and comfortable. The East Main Station will include pathways on the south side of Main Street that bicycles will be able to use.

The DTP also recommends exploring the potential for a bike share program for Downtown Bellevue. A feasibility and business plan would need to be completed prior to determine the viability of such a system.

## Corridor Studies

The projects and recommendations identified in the DTP suggest multiple types of improvements along Downtown transportation corridors to meet the needs of people using different modes. These corridor studies will balance the needs of multiple modes over several corridors, recognizing that some corridors may need to prioritize one mode over another. This may result in some corridors prioritizing pedestrians and bicyclists, some prioritizing transit, and some prioritizing motor vehicles. The DTP recommends that a corridor study be completed to evaluate how to best balance the needs of all these modes on the following corridors:

- 106th Avenue NE between Main Street and NE 12th Street
- 108th Avenue NE between Main Street and NE 12th Street
- Main Street between 100th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE

The purpose of corridor studies is to identify specific planned improvements to these corridors and evaluate potential benefits to Downtown mobility.

## Background

### *Downtown Subarea Plan*

The Bellevue Comprehensive Plan, Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) Vision 2040 and King County's Countywide Planning Policies identify Downtown Bellevue as a regional growth center—a place where growth should be focused if the region is to further growth management goals such as reducing sprawl and retaining open space. Downtown Bellevue, with 2 percent of the City's land area, is expected to accommodate most of the City's future employment and residential growth.

Bellevue's Downtown Subarea Plan establishes the vision and policy guidance that support development of Downtown as the primary urban center of the Eastside, consistent with regional, metropolitan

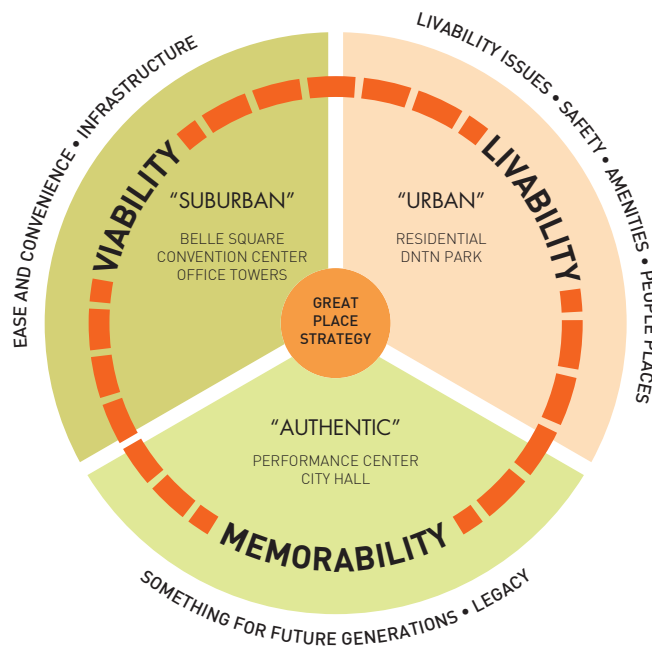
and county-wide plans. The Downtown Subarea Plan describes a Great Place Strategy for Downtown:

### **“Goal: The Great Place Strategy**

*To remain competitive in the next generation, Downtown Bellevue must be viable, livable, memorable, and accessible. It must become the symbolic as well as functional heart of the Eastside Region through the continued location of cultural, entertainment, residential, and regional uses located in distinct, mixed-use neighborhoods connected by a variety of public places and great public infrastructure.”*

The Downtown Subarea Plan is implemented through regulations (Land Use Code, Building/ Sidewalk Design Guidelines, Pedestrian Corridor Guidelines), public investments (transportation network, utilities infrastructure, parks, visitor and cultural facilities), and private-sector development and investment.

### **Downtown Livability Initiative**



Source: City of Bellevue Comprehensive Plan.

Bellevue’s Comprehensive Plan states that “Livability is about quality; about weaving an urban fabric rich in resources and quality of life. Livable cities provide welcoming places to eat and sources of entertainment. Livable cities develop parks and open space. Truly great cities are also memorable. Memorable cities impart an unforgettable experience from having visited there. Memorable cities have strong, clear identities.” The Plan notes that livability is developed through a dynamic process in which cities are relatively more viable, livable or memorable during different stages of growth.

Collectively, these factors work together to create a great place. The Plan notes that

while Downtown Bellevue should work to make progress on all three of these dimensions, it is important to focus extra attention on graduating to a higher level of livability.

In fall 2012, the City Council provided initial direction on specific downtown zoning and development regulations to be analyzed with respect to livability, including:

- Amenity incentive system;
- Building form and height;
- Design guidelines;
- Northeast Sixth Street pedestrian corridor;
- Light rail interface;
- Downtown parking;
- Vision for strip of land between 112th Avenue Northeast and Interstate 405 zoned for office limited-business (OLB);
- Downtown signage;
- Sidewalk widths and landscaping standards;
- Maintenance standards for vacant sites and buildings;
- Screening of mechanical equipment;
- Recycling and solid waste facilities;
- Vendor carts; and
- Range of permitted uses.

#### *Objectives of the Downtown Livability Initiative*

Specific objectives of the Downtown Livability Initiative include:

- Better achieve the vision for downtown as a vibrant, mixed-use center
- Enhance the pedestrian environment
- Improve the area as a residential setting
- Enhance the identity and character of downtown neighborhoods
- Incorporate elements from Downtown Transportation Plan Update and East Link design work

#### *Downtown Livability Initiative Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)*

In spring 2013, the 15 members of the Downtown Livability Advisory Committee were appointed and confirmed by the Mayor and City Council. CAC membership included representation from the Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, Parks & Community Services Board, Human Services Commission, Environmental

The over-arching purpose of the Downtown Livability Initiative is to advance implementation of the Downtown Subarea Plan, in particular the Plan's central theme of making Downtown more Viable, Livable, and Memorable.

Services Commission, Arts Commission, Bellevue Downtown Association, Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, small business, and nearby neighborhoods, as well as an architect, a Downtown resident, a City-wide representative, and a Downtown employer.

The City Council directed the Downtown Livability Advisory Committee to provide guidance to City staff in developing recommendations to update the Downtown Land Use Code. Guidance for the Committee's work was provided by the vision set forth in the existing Downtown Subarea Plan and by the Project Principles approved by the City Council on January 22, 2013 for this initiative (see Table 1 on page 6).

The CAC's review of the Land Use Code was informed through a variety of sources, including the Downtown Land Use Code Audits. The audits summarized existing code provisions and policies, described results on growth, and made observations about where codes and policies are working well and where they could be improved. The purpose of the audits was to ensure that the Land Use Code features that are working well are retained and to focus changes on items needing improvement and new opportunities. The CAC also conducted a robust public outreach program, described later in this chapter, and met with staff thirteen times over the course of the project to review and discuss options related to the Downtown Land Use Code.

Consistent with its charge to provide guidance to City staff in developing recommendations to update the Downtown Land Use Code, the CAC prepared recommendations in several major areas:

- Public Open Space
- Pedestrian Corridor
- Design Guidelines
- Amenity Incentive System
- Station Area Planning
- Building Height and Form
- Downtown Parking
- Other Topics

For each of these topics, the CAC developed one or more code-related recommendations and, in some cases, additional non-code recommendations. CAC recommendations and their relationship to the proposed code amendments considered in this Environmental Checklist are summarized in Table 6.

**Table 6** CAC Recommendations and Proposed Code Provisions

CAC Focus Area	CAC Recommendation	Corresponding Code Recommendations
<b>Public Open Space</b>	• Identify and incentivize open space strategies for each district	• Some amenities already defined by neighborhood, (such as pedestrian bridges and the Pedestrian Corridor), some can still be incentivized by neighborhood
	• Strengthen through-block connections	• 20.25A.160.D—through-block pedestrian connections
	• Consider open space space/park over I-5 from Downtown to Wilburton	• Grand Connection is a separate project
<b>Pedestrian Corridor</b>		• Addressed in separate project
<b>Design Guidelines</b>	• Rewrite for clarity • Refine content • Update review procedures	• 20.25A.140-180 rewritten and refined • 20.25A.030.D.1.a procedures for design departure
<b>Amenity Incentive System</b>	• Update amenities • Consider neighborhood specific weighting • Develop method for alternative amenities • Recalibrate economics of system	• 20.25A.070—updated amenities, offer alternative amenities, recalibrated economics
	• Make weather protection a requirement	• 20.25A.170.B—Early Win amendments required weather protection
<b>Station Area Planning</b>		• Addressed in separate project
<b>Building Height &amp; Form</b>	• DT-O-1 Residential unlimited FAR	• DT-O-1 Residential 10 max.FAR
	• DT-O-2 Max height 300'	• DT-O-2 Max height 460' (north); 430' (east); 345 (south)
	• DT-MU (all) • Max. FAR 5.0 • Max. height Residential 300' • Max. height Non-residential 200'	• DT-MU • Max. height Residential 200' • Max height Non-residential 250' • DT-MU Civic Center • Max. height Residential 350' • Max. height Non-residential 350' • Max. FAR 6.0
	• Perimeter A (all) • Max. height Residential 70' • Max. FAR 3.5	• Perimeter A-1 • Max. height Residential 55' • Perimeter A-3 • Max FAR 5.0
<b>Downtown Parking</b>		• Separate study to be addressed later • 20.25A.080H—flexibility in required parking based on defined studies
<b>Other Topics</b>	• Mechanical screening • Sidewalk widths and landscaping • Range of permitted uses • Recycling and solid waste • Food trucks	• 20.25A.130—mechanical screening adopted in Early Win amendments • 20.25A.090 and .110—landscaping standards adopted in Early Win amendments • 20.25A.050.D—range of permitted uses adopted in Early Win amendments • Recycling and solid waste to be addressed through reference to a Director's Rule • Food trucks will be part of a conformance amendment

Source: City of Bellevue, 2017

### *Estimated Growth and Capacity*

Downtown Bellevue has been one of the fastest growing neighborhoods in Bellevue over the past couple of decades with the number of housing units increasing tenfold and the population following suit. In 1990, Downtown Bellevue had 703 housing units and 1,192 people. In 2012, Downtown had over 7,500 housing units and over 10,500 people. Importantly, it is anticipated that Downtown will play a major role in accommodating future population, with projected population expected to reach 19,000 by 2035.

Similarly, Downtown Bellevue is a major employment center for the city and the region. In 2000, Downtown had about 34,000 employees; that number has grown to 44,855 in 2013. In the future, it is anticipated that Downtown will continue its role as a major employment center, with projected growth to 70,300 jobs by 2030.

The proposed land use code amendments would maintain adequate capacity to accommodate forecast growth as identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan. No changes to Downtown growth forecasts or capacity are anticipated as a result of the proposed land use code amendments.

### *Integration with Downtown Transportation Plan Update*

In addition to the consideration of recommended changes to the Land Use Code, the Project Scope included strong coordination with the companion Downtown Transportation Plan update that occurred in this same timeframe. By accommodating anticipated significant increases in Downtown activity, the comprehensive set of improvements to facilities for both motorized and non-motorized travel proposed by the Downtown Transportation Plan will enhance Downtown vitality and economic development, improve sustainability, and support livability and public health. This work is compatible with and has been coordinated with the Downtown Livability Initiative. Downtown Transportation Plan recommendations were transmitted by the Transportation Commission to the City Council on September 23, 2013.

## *Planning Framework*

The following provides a brief summary of the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan and guidance provided by the Washington Growth Management Act, Puget Sound Regional Council Vision 2040, and King County Countywide Planning Policies. An overview of the City's existing Downtown land use code provisions is also provided.

### *City of Bellevue Comprehensive Plan*

Bellevue's comprehensive plan is a broad statement of community goals and policies that direct the orderly and coordinated physical development of the city. The comprehensive plan serves as a guideline for designating land uses, infrastructure development and community services and provides specific guidance for future legislative and administrative actions. The plan reflects citizen involvement, technical analysis and the judgment of decision-makers.

Bellevue's comprehensive plan was originally adopted in 1993 and has been updated annually, with the most recent major update in 2015. Since adoption, the focus of plan has been on preserving and enhancing well-maintained livable neighborhoods, a healthy environment, a vibrant urban center, and a strong diverse local economy. The Comprehensive Plan is organized into two volumes, described below.

#### **Volume 1**

Volume 1 contains introductory materials that describe the context for the plan and a vision that establishes the city's desired future. Volume 1 also contains all of the general plan elements, together with the key goals identified for each element.

#### **Volume 2**

Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan contains subarea plans and transportation facility plans. It includes 14 subarea plans, including the Downtown Subarea Plan, each addressing the specific character,



development pattern and vision for the future. The transportation facilities plans identify the road and transit facilities needed to implement the City's transportation policies for specific subareas of the City and for pedestrian/bike improvements.

### ***Washington Growth Management Act***

The Washington State Legislature adopted the Washington Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990 per RCW 36.70A. The GMA contains a comprehensive framework for managing growth and coordinating land use with infrastructure. A selected summary of the major provisions of the GMA together with specific provisions that directly pertain to the alternatives is provided below.

The GMA contains broad planning goals to guide local jurisdictions in determining their vision for the future and in developing plans, regulations, programs and budgets to implement that vision.

The goals discourage sprawling development, encourage development in urban areas with adequate public facilities, encourage economic development throughout the state consistent with comprehensive plans, encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems, provide for the protection of property rights, and require that adequate public facilities and services necessary to support development be available when new development is ready for occupancy. The goals are not ranked in any order but can be balanced by the jurisdiction.

A fundamental requirement of the GMA is early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of plans and development regulations. Public participation procedures that are described in the procedural rules (WAC 365-195-600) include broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives, opportunity for written comment, public meetings after effective notice, provision for open discussion, communication programs, information services, and consideration of and response to public comments.

A central concept of the GMA is that comprehensive plans must be internally and externally consistent. Internally, each GMA

comprehensive plan must demonstrate that land use element, capital facilities element and financing plan are consistent. If funding is not available to support the proposed land use pattern at the adopted level of service, the jurisdiction is required to reassess the land use pattern and/or the level of service until balance is reached. Externally, local comprehensive plans are required to be consistent with the comprehensive plans of other jurisdictions with common borders or related regional issues. Standards for transportation level of service should be regionally coordinated.

## **Vision 2040**

VISION 2040, developed by the Puget Sound Regional Council and its member governments, is a growth strategy and transportation plan for the central Puget Sound region. It provides a coordinated framework for guiding growth and transportation actions over the next twenty years.

Vision 2040 discusses twelve major topic areas to guide regional growth and development, including Regional Growth Strategy, Environment, Climate Change, Urban Lands, Centers, Rural Lands, Health, Housing, Economy, Transportation, Public Services, and Plan Review.

Vision 2040 designates the City of Bellevue as a Metropolitan City and Downtown Bellevue as a Regional Growth Center, stating:

*Formally designated by the Puget Sound Regional Council, regional growth centers play a unique and important role as locations of the region's most significant business, governmental, and cultural facilities. These centers are located in either Metropolitan Cities or Core Cities. Regional growth centers are areas of higher-intensity development and contain a mix of land uses and services. Major regional investments for transportation and other infrastructure should be prioritized for these locations.<sup>1</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> Puget Sound Regional Council. Vision 2040. December 2009.

The goals and policies for regional growth centers state that regional population and employment growth will be focused in the regional centers and that funding priority—both for transportation infrastructure and for economic development—will be directed to regional growth centers to support growth consistent with the regional vision.<sup>2</sup>

### *King County Countywide Planning Policies*

GMA requires that counties adopt countywide planning policies to provide an agreed-upon framework within which cities and counties can develop comprehensive plans (RCW 36.70A.210). The purpose of these policies is to express a regional vision and help measure consistency of local plans. The King County Countywide Planning Policies were originally adopted in 1994 and were last updated in 2012. The Countywide Planning Policies address environment, development patterns, transportation, housing, economy, transportation and public facilities and services. Major themes described in the 2012 CPPs include:

- Promoting coordination and collaboration among jurisdictions;
- Establishing environmental sustainability as a foundational principle;
- Promoting economic growth and job creation;
- Integrating public health with land use and transportation; and
- Fostering social equity and environmental justice.

### *City of Bellevue Land Use Code*

Bellevue Land Use Code establishes zoning district designations, use and development requirements, design guidelines and other requirements related to land use and development for the City as a whole, including the Downtown Subarea. While Part 20.25A is the primary location for regulatory requirements and guidelines for development and activity in the Downtown, other sections are also

<sup>2</sup> Puget Sound Regional Council. *Vision 2040, policies MPP-DP-5, MPP-DP-7. December 2009.*

applicable. Land use code sections relevant to the Downtown area are briefly summarized below.

### Land Use Code 20.25A

LUC 20.25A is the section where the majority of the code requirements for development in the Downtown are contained. Table 7 provides an outline of the summarized requirements of each subsection of LUC 20.25A.

**Table 7** Land Use Code 20.25A Summary

Section	Major Provisions
<b>20.25A.10</b> General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization of the section and procedural requirements</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.015</b> Permitted Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted and prohibited uses</li> <li>• Use zone charts for all land use districts in the Downtown. Identifies permitted, prohibited and conditional uses for all zoning districts.</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.020</b> Dimensional Standards— General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dimensional standards for all zoning districts in the Downtown and notes that dimensional requirements for the Perimeter Design District are contained in LUC 20.25A.090. Dimensional standards include minimum setbacks, maximum building floor area at differing building heights, maximum lot coverage, basic and maximum building height and basic and maximum floor area ratio (FAR)</li> <li>• Exceptions to dimensional requirements</li> <li>• Basic FAR requirements</li> <li>• FAR computation with right-of-way dedication</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.025</b> Nonconforming uses, structures & sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes development and use standards and review processes for nonconforming uses, structures and sites.</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.030</b> FAR amenity incentive system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific requirements, including specific amenities and related bonuses</li> <li>• Recording required</li> <li>• Transfer of bonus floor area</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.040</b> Landscape development and fences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street frontage, rear yard and side yard landscape development requirements for each zoning district in the Downtown</li> <li>• Development standards for fences</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.045</b> Mechanical equipment screening & location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locational requirements</li> <li>• Screening requirements</li> <li>• Exhaust control standards</li> <li>• Noise requirements</li> <li>• Review process for modifications</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.050</b> Downtown parking, circulation & walkway requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum and maximum parking requirement by specific land use and zoning designation</li> <li>• Standards and process for shared parking, off-site parking; conversion to commercial use parking</li> <li>• Standards for parking area and circulation improvements and design</li> <li>• Requirements for interim and phased parking</li> <li>• Director's authority to require parking exceeding the maximum.</li> </ul>

*continued on following page*

**Table 7** Land Use Code 20.25A Summary (cont.)

Section	Major Provisions
<b>20.25A.060</b> Walkways & Sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkways and Sidewalks—Perimeter: minimum widths of perimeter walkway or sidewalk location, street tree and landscaping requirements;</li> <li>• Overhead weather protection requirements</li> <li>• Through-block pedestrian connection design guidelines</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.065</b> Civic Center Design District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development standards, including maximum lot coverage, floor area per floor, special design features for certain types of buildings, minimum rear and side setback for certain building types and sizes</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.070</b> Downtown—Old Bellevue District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design Review required</li> <li>• Development requirements, including street improvements, mid-block connections, parking, minor public accessible spaces, and pedestrian-oriented frontage</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.090</b> Perimeter Design District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of District (Subdistrict A, B, C)</li> <li>• Review criteria</li> <li>• Development standards, including dimensional standards</li> <li>• Design guidelines</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.100</b> Downtown Core Design District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All development subject to design review</li> <li>• Review criteria</li> <li>• Downtown Core Design District guidelines, including for major pedestrian corridor, transit center, pedestrian connections, major public open spaces, minor publicly accessible spaces, view preservation corridors, upper level stepback</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.110</b> Design Review Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design review criteria, including site design criteria and downtown patterns and context</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.115</b> Design Guidelines— Building/Sidewalk Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development standards, including required street wall conditions for each right-of-way designation</li> <li>• Retail Activities Exempt from FAR</li> <li>• Mid-Block Retail Connection</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.120</b> Project phasing plan required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes requirements and process for a project with multiple buildings within a single project limit.</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.125</b> Vesting and expiration of vested status of land use permits and approvals— Downtown projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes standards for vesting and for requesting an extended vesting period.</li> </ul>
<b>20.25A.130</b> Downtown pedestrian bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where permitted</li> <li>• Location and design plan</li> <li>• Public benefit required</li> <li>• Development standards</li> </ul>

## Land Use Code 20.10

LUC 20.10 establishes and defines all land use districts in the City. For the Downtown, Section 20.10.270 defines the Downtown land use districts, as summarized in Table 8 and shown in Figure 2.

**Table 8** Downtown Subarea Land Use Districts

Land Use Classification	Purpose Statement
<b>Downtown-Office District 1 (DNTN-O-1)</b>	Purpose is to provide an area for the most intensive business, financial, specialized retail, hotel, entertainment, and urban residential uses.
<b>Downtown-Office District 2 (DNTN-O-2)</b>	Purpose is to provide an area for intensive business, financial, retail, hotel, entertainment, institutional, and urban residential uses and to serve as a transition between the DNTN-O-1 District and the DNTN-MU District.
<b>Downtown-Mixed Use District (DNTN-MU)</b>	Purpose is to provide an area for a wide range of retail, office, residential, and support uses.
<b>Downtown-Residential District (DNTN-R)</b>	Purpose of the Downtown-R Land Use District is to provide an area for predominantly urban residential uses.
<b>Downtown-Old Bellevue District (DNTN-OB)</b>	Purpose is to reinforce the character of the Old Bellevue area and assure compatibility of new development with the scale and intensity of the area.
<b>Downtown-Office &amp; Limited Business District (DNTN-OLB)</b>	Purpose is to provide an area for integrated complexes made up of office, residential, and hotel uses, with eating establishments and retail sales secondary to these primary uses.

## Land Use Code 20.30

LUC 20.30 establishes the provisions for different types of land use review in the City, including the design review process, which is contained in LUC 20.30F. LUC 20.25A.010 establishes that all development in the Downtown must be reviewed by the Director of the Development Services Department through Design Review, LUC 20.30F.

LUC 20.30F.145 establishes the following decisional criteria for design review:

- A. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- B. Complies with the applicable requirements of the code

- C. Addresses all applicable design guidelines or criteria of this Code in a manner which fulfills their purpose and intent
- D. Compatible with and responds to the existing or intended character, appearance, quality of development and physical characteristics of the subject property and immediate vicinity
- E. Will be served by adequate public facilities including streets, fire protection, and utilities
- F. Consistent with any required Master Development Plan approved through the land use code

## *Environmental Review*

The purpose of this environmental document is to assist the public and decision-makers in considering the environmental impacts of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update on the built and natural environment.

### *SEPA/GMA Integration*

WAC 197-11-210 authorizes GMA jurisdictions to integrate the requirements of the SEPA and GMA. The goal is to ensure that environmental analysis under SEPA occurs as an integral part of the planning and decision-making process under GMA. Analysis of environmental impacts in the GMA planning process can result in better-informed GMA planning decision as well as avoid delays and duplication.

WAC 197-11-228 states that the appropriate scope and level of detail of environmental review should be tailored to the GMA action under consideration; jurisdictions may modify SEPA phased review as necessary to track the phasing of GMA actions; and the process of integrating SEPA and GMA should begin at the early stages of plan development.

The City of Bellevue has elected to follow an integrated SEPA/GMA process for the Downtown Livability Initiative SEPA document.

## ***Non-Project Environmental Analysis***

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) (RCW 43.21C) requires government officials to consider the environmental consequences of actions they are about to take and seek better or less impacting ways to accomplish those proposed actions. The adoption of comprehensive plans or other long-range planning activities is classified by SEPA as a non-project, or programmatic, action. A non-project action is defined as an action that is broader than a single site-specific project, and involves decisions on policies, plans or programs. SEPA establishes that environmental analysis for a non-project proposal may discuss potential impacts at a level of detail appropriate to the scope and level of planning for the proposal. This environmental document analyzes potential environmental impacts as appropriate to the general nature of this non-project proposal.

## ***Prior Environmental Review***

In March 2016, the Planning Commission recommended a set of Land Use Code amendments—referred to as the “Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments”—to the City Council for consideration and action. These amendments comprised a subset of the larger Downtown Livability code amendment project and were identified by the Planning Commission for expedited processing because the Citizen’s Advisory Committee recommendation on the topics was unanimous, and the topics were discreet and not complex.

The package of Downtown Livability Early Win Code Amendments included the following recommended amendments, all of which were adopted by the City:

- Expand uses allowed in the Downtown and remove redundant processes,
- Require signage for public spaces that are developed to earn amenity bonus points,
- Require mechanical screening to be architecturally compatible and clarify locational preferences,



- Update streetscape landscaping requirements to improve vegetation survival,
- Expand weather protection requirements to improve walkability of Downtown,
- Revise the Downtown definition to align with boundary changes adopted in the Comprehensive Plan Update, and
- Extend the Major Pedestrian Corridor east to 112th Avenue NE.

A separate programmatic SEPA Environmental Checklist was prepared for these amendments and a Threshold Determination of Non-Significance issued on November 15, 2015.

### *Scope of Analysis*

Land use regulations, in general, provide a framework that guides environmental change but they do not in themselves result in direct physical impacts to the environment. Land use regulations are also intended to anticipate and avoid, reduce or minimize adverse environmental impacts, i.e., they function as mitigation measures. Any impacts associated with legislative adoption of the Land Use Code itself would be indirect in nature; direct, physical impacts would result from public and private parties implementing projects pursuant to the revised code. Environmental review of individual projects would be used to evaluate, and to mitigate where appropriate, site specific impacts.

The environmental analysis in this document includes both responses to the non-project SEPA Checklist questions and four issue papers that address key project issues with a potential for environmental impacts. Responses to non-project SEPA Checklist questions are in Chapter 5, including both questions required through WAC 196-11-960 and supplemental City of Bellevue questions. The scope of SEPA review for each section of the proposed Downtown Land Use Code Amendments and the Downtown Transportation Master Plan major topic areas are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9** Downtown Land Use Code Amendments and Downtown Transportation Master Plan Scope of Environmental Review

Topics	Environmental Analysis
Downtown Land Use Code Amendments	
<b>Section 20.25A.10</b> General	Changes proposed include reorganization for ease of use and new titles and boundaries of overlay districts. These proposed changes are primarily administrative and unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment. This section is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.
<b>Section 20.25A.020</b> Definitions	Changes proposed include reorganization of ease of use and updated definitions to support a consistent understanding of the terms used in the Downtown Land Use Code. These proposed changes are primarily administrative and unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment. This section is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.
<b>Section 20.25A.030</b> Application Review	This section establishes the regulatory framework for downtown development review and proposed changes are for ease of use. The proposed changes are primarily administrative and unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment. One proposed amendment would provide a new administrative process to modify provisions of the Land Use Code. This amendment is further described and discussed in the Design Guidelines Issue Paper.
<b>Section 20.25A.040</b> Nonconforming Uses, Structures and Sites	Proposed amendments would correct internal references, streamline the review process for nonconforming use expansions and allow nonconforming structures that are destroyed to be rebuilt consistent with its nonconformity. These proposed changes are primarily procedural and unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment. This section is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.
<b>Section 20.25A.050</b> Land Use Charts	The majority of amendments to the Land Use Charts were adopted in March 2016 as part of the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments.  In the current proposal, amendments include updated citations in the transportation and utilities use zone chart notes and a new residential note regarding the Senior Congregate Care Center use in the DNTN-O-2 zone. These minor revisions are unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment and are not further discussed as part of this SEPA review.
<b>Section 20.25A.060</b> Dimensional Standards	Building Height and Form Issue Paper
<b>Section 20.25A.070</b> FAR/Amenity Incentive System	Amenity Incentive System Issue Paper
<b>Section 20.25A.080</b> Parking Standards	Proposed changes to parking standards would add visitor and bicycle parking requirements, increase parking structure entry height requirements to allow for accessible vans and allow flexibility to modify parking requirements based on parking studies. These minor revisions are unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment and are not further discussed as part of this SEPA review.
<b>Section 20.25A.090</b> Street & Pedestrian Circulation Standards	The substantive portion of the proposed amendment would widen sidewalk widths; remaining proposed changes are organizational and procedural in nature. These revisions are unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment and are not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.

*continued on following page*

**Table 9** Downtown Land Use Code Amendments and Downtown (cont.)

Topics	Environmental Analysis
<b>Section 20.25A.100</b> Downtown Pedestrian Bridges	Proposed changes would establish the development agreement process [LUC 20.25A.030] as the review procedure for pedestrian bridge location and design plans. This change is unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment and is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.
<b>Section 20.25A.110</b> Landscape Development	Amendments were adopted in March 2016 as part of the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments.  In the current proposal, proposed changes would allow for flexibility in changing tree species if necessary and update the linear buffer standards. These minor revisions are unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment and are not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.
<b>Section 20.25A.120</b> Green & Sustainability Factor	This new section is intended to contribute toward improved sustainability through the use of green and sustainable site development measures in the Downtown. All new development would be required to meet a minimum Green Sustainability Factor score that is equivalent to 30% of a parcel with green or sustainable elements. The likely impact of this new section would be beneficial to the natural and built environment; no adverse impacts are anticipated. This section is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.
<b>Section 20.25A.130</b> Mechanical Equipment Screening & Location Standards	Amendments were adopted in March 2016 as part of the Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win Code Amendments. No changes are proposed as part of the current proposal.
<b>Section 20.25A.135</b> Downtown Neighborhood Specific Standards	The proposed changes are primarily organizational and unlikely to result in direct impacts to the natural or built environment. This section is not discussed further as part of this SEPA review.
<b>Section 20.25A.140</b> Downtown Design Guidelines Introduction	Design Guidelines Issue Paper
<b>Section 20.25A.150</b> Context	Design Guidelines Issue Paper
<b>Section 20.25A.160</b> Site Organization	Design Guidelines Issue Paper
<b>Section 20.25A.170</b> Streetscape & Public Realm	Design Guidelines Issue Paper
<b>Section 20.25A.180</b> Building Design (Base, Top, Middle)	Design Guidelines Issue Paper
<b>Downtown Transportation Master Plan</b>	<b>Transportation Issue Paper</b>

## Public Outreach

Public participation is a fundamental goal of the Washington GMA and is central to the update of the Comprehensive Plan. Public engagement provides important opportunities for the community to help shape the plan, to learn more about the city and to build community connections. Recognizing the importance of this goal, WAC 365-196-800 establishes that jurisdictions planning under the GMA must establish procedures for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive plans and development regulations. Public outreach efforts for the Downtown Livability Initiative and the Downtown Transportation Plan Update are summarized below.

### Downtown Livability Initiative

Over the course of the Downtown Livability Initiative, the City has provided a wide range of different ways to participate, including traditional open houses, walking tours, focus group discussions, website review, and participation in public meetings. Major opportunities are summarized below.

#### Downtown Livability Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

The Downtown Livability Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) was a key element in the City's public outreach process. The CAC convened thirteen times over the course of their work. CAC meetings were announced on the project webpage and noticed to the project mailing list. An opportunity for the public to comment was provided at each CAC meeting. Following each meeting, meeting minutes were provided on the project website.

#### Open Houses

- **November 2012:** A project scoping and kick-off meeting provided a project overview and introduction and invited comment on the project scope and approach.

#### Washington Growth Management Act Goal 11

Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts. (RCW 36.70A.020)

- **July 2013:** In order to provide multiple opportunities to participate, open houses covering the same information were held on two different days and times. The open houses provided an update on the project and to invited comment on early work.
- **June 2014:** A public open house provided a project update and invited comment on the CAC's preliminary recommendations.
- **June 11, 2015:** A public open house and community check-in meeting provide an opportunity for interested members of the public to hear in detail about the CAC recommendations, provide input and learn how to stay engaged through the planning commission and City Council processes.

#### *Focus Groups*

To gain targeted input from specific stakeholders, focus group meetings were held in March 2013, July 2013 and June 2014, described below.

- In March 2013, focus group meetings were held over the course of eight days. 140 persons representing architects and planners, property owners and developers, brokers, companies and retailers, the former Downtown Plan Advisory Body, institutions and visionaries, residents and employees participated in 18 different focus groups. Topics for focus group discussion included the amenity incentive system, building height and form, quality of the built environment, pedestrian realm, vision for the OLB District along I-405, Downtown parking supply and other code issues. For each topical area, participants were asked what is working well and not so well, what are the key considerations and what suggestions could be provided. Meeting summaries were used to help inform the CAC, staff and public consideration of issues.
- In July 2013, two focus group opportunities were provided in conjunction with the two open houses described above. These meetings provided an update on project progress and specifically on the draft Land Use Code Audits conducted as part of the project. Focus group discussions considered issues related to Downtown design, Downtown connectivity and miscellaneous topics.

- The June 2014 focus groups followed an open house that provided a status report on the project and opportunities to comment on the CAC formation of recommendations. Following the open house, small groups of 10-12 participated in a facilitated discussion, with a full set of meeting notes from these meetings provided to the CAC prior to their final meeting.

#### *Walking Tours*

To provide firsthand experience of the Downtown environment, walking tours open to the public were conducted on April 27 and May 1, 2013. Each day featured two tours of Downtown focused on either north or south Downtown. A total of about 45 persons participated in the tours. The CAC was also given the opportunity to do a walking tour with City staff prior to their first formal meeting for orientation.

#### *Community Meetings*

On January 16, 2014, City staff provided an update on the Downtown Livability Initiative, focused on interests of Downtown residents, to the Downtown Bellevue Residents Association.

#### *Planning Commission Meetings*

Between mid-2014 and February 2017, the Planning Commission met over 20 times to review information, discuss issues and make recommendations on the Downtown Land Use Code. All meetings were open to the public and public comment was invited. Planning Commission meeting information was also posted on the City's website.

#### *Website*

Over the course of the project, the City has provided updated project information on a project website to describe the project, invite sign-ups for email/text messages regarding project progress, announce workshops and community meetings, announce CAC, Planning Commission and City Council meetings and provide background information and project reports.

## *Downtown Transportation Plan*

Community outreach for the Downtown Transportation Plan Updated began in the summer of 2011 and included a variety of activities to understand the issues and opportunities related to Downtown mobility. Significant community events included:

### **Downtown Bicycle Mobility Tours**

In September of 2011, staff led, with the support of the Bellevue Downtown Association, several bicycle tours of Downtown Bellevue and beyond. A tour targeted toward Downtown residents provided opportunity for dialog on bicycle facilities and parking that would support bicycle mobility within Downtown. Three separate tours focused on bicycle commuters who rode with staff along routes through nearby neighborhoods to the I-90 Trail/Mountains to Sound Greenway and to two access points for the SR 520 Trail.

### **Feet First Walking Audits**

In fall 2011, the Seattle-based pedestrian advocacy organization Feet First worked with staff to lead Downtown walking tours or “audits.” Feet First documented public comments, photographed the events, and provided recommendations in a Downtown Bellevue Walking Audit Report.

### **Community Open House Events**

Three open houses were conducted over the course of the planning process:

- **November 1, 2011:** Open house focused on the major mobility topic areas, roadways, transit, pedestrian and bicycle.
- **November 29, 2012:** A key topic in the joint open house with the Downtown Livability Initiative was downtown mobility.
- **April 24, 2013:** Preliminary recommendations of the Downtown Transportation Plan Update were highlighted at the Spring Transportation EXPO.

## **Stakeholder Outreach**

City staff provided updates and fielded questions at meetings of organizations that have a significant interest in Downtown mobility. These include the Bellevue Downtown Association, the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce, the Building Owners and Managers Association, the Eastside Transportation Association, representatives of the hospitals in the Medical District, and individual Downtown businesses.

## **Community and Professional Organizations**

City staff provided information and discussed the Downtown Transportation Plan with the Bellevue Network on Aging and its affiliated community partnership; the Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative. Staff also provided presentations to the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Institute of Transportation Engineers.

## **Transportation Commission**

Beginning in 2011, the Transportation Commission met over 29 times to review information, discuss issues and make recommendations on the Downtown Transportation Plan. All meetings were open to the public and public comment was invited. Planning Commission meeting information was also posted on the City's website.

## **Website**

Over the course of the project, the City has provided updated project information on a project website to describe the project, invite sign-ups for email/text messages regarding project progress, announce workshops and community meetings, announce Transportation Commission and City Council meetings and provide background information and project reports.





# 4

## SEPA Environmental Checklist Part B: Environmental Elements

As described in the Section 1 (Proposal Overview and Summary), the proposed Comprehensive Plan Update is a GMA action and environmental review is being conducted in an integrated SEPA/GMA document. Environmental documentation contained in the Proposal Overview, Parts A and D of this Environmental Checklist, and the attached issue papers provide the basis for the City's threshold determination. Part B is not required to be completed in an integrated SEPA/GMA document [WAC 197-11-235(3)(b)] and is not included in this document.



# 5

## SEPA Environmental Checklist Part D: Supplemental Sheet for Nonproject Actions

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment. When answering these questions, be aware of the extent of the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

**1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?**

As a non-project action, the proposal would not directly impact water, air quality, noise or release of hazardous substances. However, project-level urban development, such as new commercial and residential development, can cause impacts to these types of environmental resources. Future project-level development consistent with LUC 20.25A, as amended, and development projects resulting from the updated Downtown Transportation Master Plan, could result in such impacts. Specific measures have been incorporated into the proposal would help mitigate impacts and

potentially result in a beneficial impact on these elements of the environment. These measures include:

- *LUC 20.25A.120, Green and Sustainability Factor* would increase the use of green and sustainable elements in urban developments, including enhanced landscaping, green roofs, green walls, and permeable paving.
- *LUC 20.25A.070, FAR/Amenity Incentive System*, includes measures to encourage pedestrian and bicycle mobility and sustainable development.
- *Bicycle and pedestrian improvements proposed as part of the Downtown Transportation Master Plan*, are intended to encourage increased bicycle and pedestrian mobility in the Downtown and reduced reliance in vehicular transportation.

In addition, future project specific development proposals within the City that may result in the impacts identified in the question would be reviewed consistent with all applicable provisions of the Bellevue Land Use Code and the City of Bellevue environmental review process.

*Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:*  
Please see the response to Question D.1, above.

## **2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?**

As a non-project action, the proposal would not directly impact plants, animals or marine life. In addition, the Downtown Subarea is a largely developed area that does not contain any designated habitat areas. Consequently, the potential for future project-level development to impact plants, animals or marine life within the study area is unlikely to be significant.

Stormwater runoff associated with new development could impact plant and animal habitat outside of the Downtown Subarea. Future development projects would be reviewed consistent with current applicable provisions of the Bellevue Municipal Code, including BMC 24.06, Storm and Surface Water Utility Code. In addition, measures incorporated into the proposal would help

mitigate impacts to stormwater runoff that could affect plant and animal habitat in surrounding areas:

- *LUC 20.25A.120, Green and Sustainability Factor* would increase the use of green and sustainable elements in urban developments, including enhanced landscaping, green roofs, green walls, and permeable paving.
- *LUC 20.25A.070, FAR/Amenity Incentive System*, includes measures to encourage pedestrian and bicycle mobility, reducing reliance on vehicular mobility, and sustainable development.
- *Bicycle and pedestrian improvements proposed as part of the Downtown Transportation Master Plan*, are intended to encourage increased bicycle and pedestrian mobility in the Downtown and reduced reliance in vehicular transportation.

*Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:* Please see the response to Question D.2, above.

### **3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?**

As a non-project action, the proposal will not deplete energy or natural resources. However, project specific development proposals within the City that may result in increased energy consumption and would be reviewed consistent with the City of Bellevue SEPA procedures and requirements of the applicable service provider.

*Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources include:*

- *LUC 20.25A.120, Green and Sustainability Factor* would increase the use of green and sustainable elements in urban developments, including enhanced landscaping, green roofs, green walls, and permeable paving.
- *LUC 20.25A.070, FAR/Amenity Incentive System*, includes measures to encourage pedestrian and bicycle mobility, reducing reliance on vehicular mobility, and sustainable development.

- *LUC 20.25A.180D.2, Maximize energy efficiency in tower orientation and articulation*, contains measures to build building energy performance in downtown towers.
- *The proposed Downtown Transportation Master Plan* is intended to increase mobility options for all modes of travel, including transit, bicycle, pedestrian and vehicular travel. The Plan's focus on multi-modal mobility is intended to encourage increased bicycle and pedestrian mobility in the Downtown and reduce reliance in vehicular transportation, which would help to conserve energy and natural resources.

**4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?**

The Downtown Subarea is entirely contained within a designated urban area and does not contain or adjoin any designated environmentally sensitive areas, agricultural, forest or wilderness areas, or wild and scenic rivers. No impacts to these features are anticipated and no mitigation is proposed.

The proposed land use code amendments provide for enhancing, protecting and preserving open space in the Downtown Subarea. Proposed measures include:

- *LUC 20.25A.070, Amenity Incentive System* would include encouraged improvements to the Pedestrian Corridor, development of public outdoor plazas, donation of park property, improvement of public park property, and development of active recreation areas, as amenities under the Amenity Incentive System.
- *LUC 20.25A.090.C.1 Major Pedestrian Corridor*, carries forward existing guidance for preserving and enhancing the Pedestrian Corridor.
- *LUC 20.25A.140–180, Design Guidelines*, provide general

and specific guidance for preserving, protecting and enhancing public open space, including:

- » A predominate goal of the Design Guidelines is “To advance the theme of “City in a Park” for Downtown, create more green features and public open space, and promote connections to the rest of the park and open space system.” (20.25A.140)
- » Guidance for the relationship of development to publicly accessible open space, including solar access and accessibility. (20.25A.150.B)
- » Guidance for maximizing sunlight on open spaces. (20.25A.150.E)
- » Guidance for organizing site development areas to include open spaces that encourage active and passive recreation, spontaneous and planned events, and the preservation of the natural environment. (20.25A.160.E)
- » Guidance to locate the base of buildings harmoniously with parks and open space, locate towers away from parks and open space, and integrate open space into rooftop elements. (20.25A.180)

Historic and cultural resources would continue to be protected through project-level SEPA review of development proposals. In addition, the proposed land use code amendments include measures to preserve historic or cultural sites, including:

- The proposal carries forward the existing intent of the Downtown—Old Bellevue District to preserve the historic qualities of this district. (20.25A.010.B)
- The proposed Amenity Incentive System would add historic preservation of physical sites/buildings and documentation of historic and cultural resources as amenities in the Amenity Incentive System. (20.25A.070)

*Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:* Please see the response to question D.4, above



**5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?**

Adoption of the proposed actions would establish an updated regulatory framework for future site-specific development in the Downtown Subarea. As described in Chapter 3, the proposed Land Use Code amendments are part of a larger city initiative to make the Downtown more people-friendly, vibrant and memorable and to add to the amenities that make for a great urban center.

The proposed regulatory amendments do not change nature or type of permitted land uses and are consistent with the policy guidance provided in the Downtown Subarea Plan. The proposal is not expected to result in any land uses that are incompatible with existing plans. Because the Downtown Subarea is not adjacent to nor contain any designated shoreline areas, proposed regulations are not anticipated to allow or encourage shoreline uses that are incompatible with existing plans.

The proposed code amendments allow for increased building heights, subject to the proposed Amenity Incentive System. Assuming development pursuant to the new code, Downtown's future land use pattern would remain very similar to what exists today but would become incrementally more intensive over time in some zoning districts. Potential impacts associated with increased building heights and the FAR/Amenity Incentive System are discussed in the Building Height and Form and Amenity Incentive System issue papers.

The proposed Downtown Transportation Master Plan is intended to advance the adopted vision for Downtown Bellevue, accommodate the anticipated travel demands from the 2030 land use forecast, plan for multiple modes of travel within and to and from Downtown Bellevue and minimize traffic impacts on neighborhoods. Actions identified in the proposed Plan would support existing and planned land use and are not anticipated to result in any land use conflicts.

The proposal has been reviewed for consistency with the Washington Growth Management Act, the Puget Sound Regional Council Vision 2040 and the King County Countywide Planning Policies. Please see the policy discussion in Chapter 3, Proposal Overview.

*Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:* Please see the response to question D.5, above.

**6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?**

As a non-project action, the proposal would not directly impact demand on transportation or public services or utilities. The proposal is consistent with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan, which establishes growth targets through 2035.

Specifically, the proposed Downtown Transportation Master Plan is intended to advance the adopted vision for Downtown Bellevue, accommodate the anticipated travel demands from the 2030 land use forecast, plan for multiple modes of travel within and to and from Downtown Bellevue and minimize traffic impacts on neighborhoods. Proposed actions are intended to increase mobility through enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections and increased transit coverage.

*Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:* Please see the response to Question D.6, above.

**7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.**

Because the proposal incorporates measures to protect the environment and is consistent with the City's adopted development regulations and Comprehensive Plan, no conflicts with local, state or federal laws for the protection of the environment are anticipated.

In addition, the proposal has been reviewed for consistency with the Washington Growth Management Act, the Puget Sound

Regional Council Vision 2040 and the King County Countywide Planning Policies. No conflicts with local, state or federal laws for the protection of the environment have been identified.

## *Supplemental City of Bellevue Questions*

### **1. State the major conclusions, significant areas of controversy and uncertainty:**

The proposed amendments to the Land Use Code for the Downtown Bellevue Subarea are intended to advance implementation of the Downtown Subarea Plan, in particular the Plan's central theme of making Downtown more viable, livable, and memorable. The updated Downtown Transportation Plan is also intended to advance the adopted vision for Downtown Bellevue, with an emphasis on planning for transportation projects that would plan for multiple modes of travel within and to and from Downtown Bellevue.

Key elements of the proposal that, including the updated Downtown Transportation Plan, are discussed more specifically in Chapter 6. The major conclusions of the analysis are as follows:

- Many of the proposed land use code amendments consist of minor revisions, updates to reflect current conditions, reorganization for ease of use, or procedure changes and are unlikely to result in any significant adverse environmental impacts.
- Substantive changes are proposed to 20.25A.060 (Dimensional Charts), 20.25A.070 (FAR/Amenity Incentive System), 20.25A.120 (Green and Sustainability Factor), 20.25A.140 -180 (Design Guidelines), discussed below.
  - » *20.25A.060—Dimensional Charts.* The primary change to the dimensional charts is to allow increased height through the amended Amenity Incentive System. In general, the proposed Code would continue the established “wedding cake” pattern of building heights in downtown—tallest in the central core, and tapering

down towards the edges of downtown to buffer adjacent low density residential neighborhoods. This stepping down in height, and the application of design guidelines to properties at the borders, would continue to help protect adjacent neighborhoods from extreme contrasts in height, bulk and intensity.

Assuming development pursuant to the new code, Downtown's future land use pattern would remain very similar to what exists today but would become incrementally more intensive over time in some zoning districts. The most dramatic changes relative to current standards for building height and development form would occur in the OLB districts along 112th Ave NE south of Main St, adjacent to I-405 and the future light rail station, where new buildings could be significantly larger in scale. Maximum heights in this area would increase from 90 feet to 230 feet between Main St and NE 4th St, and to 430 feet between NE 4th St and NE 8th St. Maximum FAR would increase from 3.0 to 5.0. Maximum heights in the downtown core district would increase from 450 feet to 600 feet.

The maximum heights permitted in the Code will not likely materialize in all districts or be used by all future projects and would occur over time. Based on development projects constructed over the past three decades, the City has documented that only approximately 50 percent of downtown projects used the amenity bonus to achieve maximum available heights and less than 80 percent achieve maximum FAR (City of Bellevue, Draft Land Use Code Audit, June 2013).

- » *20.25A.070—FAR/Amenity Incentive System.* The proposed revisions to the FAR/Amenity Incentive System are intended to 1) continue to promote the City's downtown livability goals, and 2) recognize and provide effective incentives for current downtown economic and market conditions. Proposed changes to the

incentives would delete amenities that 1) have not been used, such as childcare services, 2) are now mandatory requirements, such as pedestrian-oriented frontage, or 3) are currently standard development practices rather than amenities, such as underground parking. New amenities are proposed that are most important to achieving downtown livability and the desired future for Downtown. Collectively, these changes are not anticipated to result in any significant adverse environmental implications and, depending on how they are implemented, may result in beneficial implications for downtown livability.

- » *20.25A.120—Green and Sustainability Factor.* The proposed Green and Sustainability Factor would be required of all new downtown development, and is intended to help soften and mitigate impacts of dense urban development. The primary impact of this change is likely to be beneficial, with improved sustainability, including potential reduced stormwater runoff, increased walking and biking mobility, use of native and drought tolerant plants, and increased use of green building technologies such as green roofs and green walls. This feature of the proposal is likely to have beneficial implications to the natural and built environment. No significant adverse environmental impacts are identified.
- » *20.25A.140-180—Design Guidelines.* The Downtown Design Guidelines have been consolidated, reorganized and streamlined to improve usability. Overall, however, both the draft and existing guidelines continue to support adopted Comprehensive Plan direction in seeking to “... ensure high quality, aesthetically pleasing Downtown development” (S-DT-10). From an environmental perspective, the proposed design guidelines help to avoid or mitigate potential development impacts on aesthetics and land use compatibility, pedestrian mobility and pedestrian-friendly design, open space, and on-site vehicular circulation and parking. Environmental impacts

are likely to result in beneficial or neutral impacts on the environment.

- The transportation system proposed by the Downtown Transportation Plan will accommodate forecast growth through 2030 in a transportation system that balances the needs of multiple transportation modes. Key findings for each mode of transportation are summarized below:
  - » *Vehicles and roadways.* Delay will increase in the PM peak hour compared to existing conditions, but adoption of the proposed amendments to the Land Use Code will help to mitigate this increase and no significant adverse environmental implications are anticipated.
  - » *Transit.* Improvements in transit coverage, capacity, speed and reliability will improve downtown mobility. Potential impacts, if any, on non-transit traffic would be addressed in future corridor studies and related environmental review.
  - » *Pedestrians.* Proposed pedestrian improvements would improve downtown pedestrian mobility. Potential impacts of mid-block crossings on vehicular traffic flow would be assessed on a project-specific basis and related project-level environmental review.
  - » *Bicycles.* Proposed bicycle improvements would improve downtown bicycle mobility. Some bicycle-specific improvements, such as sharrows, protected lanes and green lanes, could impact traffic operations on roadways where they are implemented. Potential impacts would be assessed through corridor studies or on a project-specific basis and associated environmental review.

Overall, proposed Land Use Code amendments and the Downtown Transportation Plan are anticipated to result in neutral or positive impacts to the environment.

**2. State the issues to be resolved, including the environmental choices to be made among alternative courses of action:**

From a high-level perspective the primary issue to be resolved is how to achieve the City's vision for a livable and vibrant Downtown, consistent with the vision established in the Downtown Subarea Plan. Environmental choices and options have been considered in a lengthy review process by the Downtown Livability Initiative Citizen's Advisory Committee for the proposed Land Use Code amendments and by the Downtown Transportation Plan Citizen's Advisory Committee for the Downtown Transportation Plan. See the discussion in Chapter 3 and the respective final reports for each advisory committee. In addition, the Transportation Commission and Planning Commission have considered environmental choices and options over the course of their public deliberation processes, consisting of over 50 public meetings, collectively between the two commissions.

**3. State the impacts of the proposal, including any significant adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated:**

No significant environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposal. Impacts that may occur would be minor in extent and degree or could be addressed by the existing regulatory framework. Overall, impacts are likely to be neutral or beneficial. For example, the Amenity Incentive System would ensure that public amenities are provided as building heights are allowed to increase. The Green and Sustainability Factor would establish a minimum threshold requirement for incorporation of environmental sustainability elements into new development.

As noted in the proposed Downtown Transportation Plan, forecast growth will result in an increase in vehicle trips. The Downtown Transportation Plan would promote increased multimodal mobility, which may reduce the overall level of vehicular use and associated impacts to air quality, stormwater runoff quality and greenhouse gas emissions. Potential impacts of some bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects on vehicular traffic flow would be assessed in specific corridor or project-level studies and associated environmental review.

**4. Describe any proposed mitigation measures and their effectiveness:**

As noted above, no significant adverse environmental impacts are identified for the proposal and no mitigation is proposed. Overall, impacts are likely to be neutral or beneficial. To the extent that project-level mitigation may be needed for future development projects, the proposed regulations and plan provide an important element of an overall citywide program to mitigate the impacts of growth, in conjunction with the City's other development and environmental regulations.





# 6

## Environmental Issue Papers

### *Introduction*

The issue papers contained in this chapter provide background information, a review of existing and proposed policy changes, and an environmental analysis of potential implications associated with proposed new or amended policies. Each issue paper begins with a summary table that highlights key issues and related SEPA implications, followed by a more complete discussion of these issues and existing conditions.

### *Building Height and Form*

This issue paper discusses the potential impacts of proposed Downtown Livability Initiative amendments to land use code provisions relating to building height and form. Impacts to several interrelated elements of the environment are addressed, including views, wind, shadows, and light and glare. The proposed amendments would allow more intensive development of high-rise buildings in portions of downtown Bellevue, as expressed in permitted height and floor area ratio (FAR). Potential adverse impacts from construction of more intensive buildings generally include the following: (1) limiting or obstructing views of the sky and surrounding landscape and natural features; (2) increasing wind turbulence at ground level; (3) casting or increasing shadows on public spaces and sidewalks; and (4) generating additional light and glare. The impact

### Floor Area Ratio

Floor area ratio is the ratio of total square feet of a building to the total square feet of the property on which it is located.

assessment is based on the incremental changes in permitted building height and form that would occur if the proposed code is adopted by the City Council and how the proposed code addresses the potential impacts of this change. The changes in height and form would occur in an urban downtown area that is already developed intensively and would result from redevelopment of individual properties over time. Key conclusions related to environmental implications are summarized in Table 10, below and discussed in further detail in the balance of this issue paper.

**Table 10** Key Building Height and Form Issues and Environmental Implications

Key Issues	Environmental Implications
<b>Views</b>	<p>Taller buildings could partially obstruct or block some existing views of surrounding mountains, water, the downtown Seattle skyline and the sky from some buildings, open spaces or sidewalks. The degree of change in potential view impacts relative to existing building height would depend on specific locations, design and orientation of future buildings. Neither the current or proposed codes protect private views.</p> <p>Taller high-rise buildings would also increase view opportunities, and could also increase the prominence, variety and attractiveness of Bellevue's skyline.</p>
<b>Sun and Shadow</b>	<p>High-rise buildings can cast or increase shadows on adjacent parks, publically accessible open spaces and pedestrian corridors. Potential impacts are addressed in draft design guidelines and would require mitigation through project design.</p>
<b>Wind</b>	<p>High-rise buildings can channel and accelerate wind conditions at ground level, resulting in discomfort for pedestrians. Potential impacts are addressed in draft design guidelines and would be mitigated for specific projects.</p>
<b>Light and Glare</b>	<p>Lighting of buildings and sites can spill over and effect adjacent sites. Reflective building surfaces and glazing can generate glare to drivers, pedestrians, and building occupants. Potential impacts are addressed in draft design guidelines and would require mitigation through project design.</p>

## **Background**

### **Current Height and Floor Area Standards**

Current downtown zoning districts and perimeter design/overlay districts are shown on Figure 2 on page 23. The Land Use Code establishes the uses and dimensional standards that apply to each district and sub-district. Existing and proposed building height and floor area ratio (FAR) are summarized by zoning district in Table 11 on the following pages. The current downtown code establishes a “base” and “maximum” building height and FAR for each zoning district. Maximum height and maximum FAR can be achieved only by using the code’s incentive system, which grants increases in height and FAR for projects that incorporate desirable design features and public amenities into proposed buildings. Current maximum building heights range from a high of 450 feet in the DT-O-1 district, 288 feet in the DT-O-2 district, and dropping to between 90 and 105 feet in the OLB districts(s) located along 112th Ave SE adjacent to I-405. Maximum FAR ranges from a high of 8.0 to 10.0 (effective) in the DT-O-1 district, and reducing to 3.0 in the OLB district. Height and FAR are further reduced in the perimeter design districts to achieve a transition to surrounding lower density residential neighborhoods.

### **Views**

Downtown Bellevue provides views of the surrounding landscape and natural features from numerous locations, including streets, public and private buildings, city parks and open spaces. Major visual features include Mt. Rainier, the Cascade and Olympic Mountains, Lake Washington, and the Seattle skyline. The broadest and most encompassing views are available to downtown residents and workers from the higher floors of high-rise buildings. The downtown Bellevue skyline itself is also a notable visual feature from numerous locations and it has become more prominent as downtown has developed over the past several decades.

**Table 11** Proposed New Base FARs and Heights

Downtown Land Use District	Building Type	Current Basic FAR	Current Max FAR	New Base FAR	New Max FAR (PC Proposed)
DT-O-1	Nonresidential	5.0	8.0	6.75	8.0
	Residential	5.0	Unlimited—effectively 10.0	8.5	10.0
DT-O-2 North of NE 8th St	Nonresidential	4.0	6.0	5.0	6.0
	Residential	4.0	6.0	5.0	6.0
DT-O-2 East of 110th Ave NE	Nonresidential	4.0	6.0	5.0	6.0
	Residential	4.0	6.0	5.0	6.0
DT-O-2 South of NE 4th St	Nonresidential	4.0	6.0	5.0	6.0
	Residential	4.0	6.0	5.0	6.0
DT-MU	Nonresidential	0.5	3.0	3.25	5.0
	Residential	2.0	5.0	4.25	5.0
DT-MU-Civic Center	Nonresidential	0.5	3.0	3.25	6.0
	Residential	2.0	5.0	4.25	6.0
DT-OLB North	Nonresidential	0.5	3.0	2.5	3.0
	Residential	2.0	3.0	2.5	3.0
DT-OLB Central	Nonresidential	0.5	3.0	2.5	6.0
	Residential	2.0	3.0	2.5	6.0
DT-OLB Central	Nonresidential	0.5	3.0	2.5	5.0
	Residential	2.0	3.0	2.5	5.0
DT-OB	Please see Perimeter Overlay A-2 and B-1 for Old Bellevue FAR and height parameters. Perimeter Overlays cover all of the Old Bellevue underlying zoning.				
DT-R	Nonresidential	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Residential	2.0	5.0	4.25	5.0
Perimeter Overlay A-1 (DT-MU & DT-R underlying zoning)	Nonresidential	0.5	1.0 in MU; 0.5 in R	1.0 in MU; 0.5 in R	1.0 in MU; 0.5 in R
	Residential	2.0	3.5	3.0	3.5
Perimeter Overlay A-2 (DT-OB & DT-MU underlying zoning)	Nonresidential	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Residential	2.0	3.5	3.25	3.5
Perimeter Overlay A-3 (DT-MU underlying zoning)	Nonresidential	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Residential	2.0	3.5	3.25	5.0
Perimeter Overlay B-1 (DT-MU, CT-OB, & DT-R underlying zoning)	Nonresidential	0.5	1.5 in MU; 1.0 in OB; 0.5 in R	1.5 in MU; 1.0 in OB; 0.5 in R	1.5 in MU; 1.0 in OB; 0.5 in R
	Residential	2.0	5.0	4.25	5.0
Perimeter Overlay B-2 (DT-MU underlying zoning)	Nonresidential	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Residential	2.0	5.0	4.25	5.0
Perimeter Overlay B-3 (DT-MU underlying zoning)	Nonresidential	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Residential	2.0	5.0	4.25	5.0

*\*Building height trigger for additional code requirements not applicable.*

Current Basic Height (ft)	Current Max Height & Max Height with “15’/15% rule” as applicable (ft)	New Max Height including “15’/15% rule” as applicable (PC proposed; ft)	New Basic Height & Building Height Trigger for Additional Code Requirements (ft)
200	345/450	600	345
200	450	600	450
150	250/288	460	288
150	250/288	460	288
150	250/288	403	288
150	250/288	403	288
150	250/288	345	288
150	250/288	345	288
60	100/115	230	115
150	200/230	288	230
60	200/230	403	230
150	250/288	403	288
75	75/90	90	90*
75	90/105	105	105*
75	75/90	403	90
75	90/105	403	105
75	75/90	230	90
75	90/105	230	105
60	65/75	75	75*
150	200/230	230	230*
30	40	40	40*
30	55	55	55*
30	40	40	40*
30	55	70	55
30	40	70	40
30	55	70	55
30	65/72	72	72*
45	90/99	99	99*
30	65/72	72	72*
45	90/99	176-264	99
30	65/72	72	72*
45	90/99	220	99

The City has adopted a number of policies and regulations that address consideration or protection of views. The Comprehensive Plan Urban Design Element generally directs the City to “protect and enhance views of water, mountains, skylines or other unique landmarks from public places as valuable assets” [UD-23]. The Plan also calls on the City to ensure access to sunlight and avoid shadows on public places [UD-32], and to “identify and maintain prime views from public places, through regulations and standards” [UD-34]. Collectively, existing policies are focused on views from public, not private places.

Other adopted policies recognize public and private open spaces and trees as parts of downtown’s visual character [UD-20, UD-22].

A primary objective of the Downtown Subarea Plan is to achieve and enhance livability, and several policies identify the importance of open space to the urban environment. Policy S-DT-37, for example, provides direction to design guidelines to link building intensity to a number of factors, including compatibility with surrounding buildings and maintenance of view corridors.

The current Land Use Code contains several design guidelines specific to protection of views downtown. In the Core design district, sub-section 20.25A.100.E.6 identifies generic “view preservation corridors” which retain views of Lake Washington, the Seattle skyline, and the Olympic and Cascade Mountains from “major public spaces” and the “major pedestrian corridor.” Identification and preservation of these views must be considered in the siting, orientation and bulk of structures in the Core design district.

View corridors are not mapped or otherwise identified specifically in the code or Comprehensive Plan; the City has relied on design review of individual projects to identify and preserve view corridors. Mitigating impacts to views typically requires a reduction in building height, bulk, design and/or orientation. In situations where there is sufficient policy support, the City can also use its SEPA substantive authority to mitigate impacts to the environment, including views.

Most cities, including Bellevue, focus any protection efforts on views from public places and do not regulate impacts to views from or to private property.

20.25A.110.B.3, which applies to all of downtown, directs the City to consider the possible negative impact of buildings on views from existing buildings and redevelopment sites. The availability of public views from public spaces—such as streets/intersections, parks and plazas—should also be considered. This consideration occurs during design review and SEPA review of individual projects.

### **Wind, Shade and Shadow, Light and Glare**

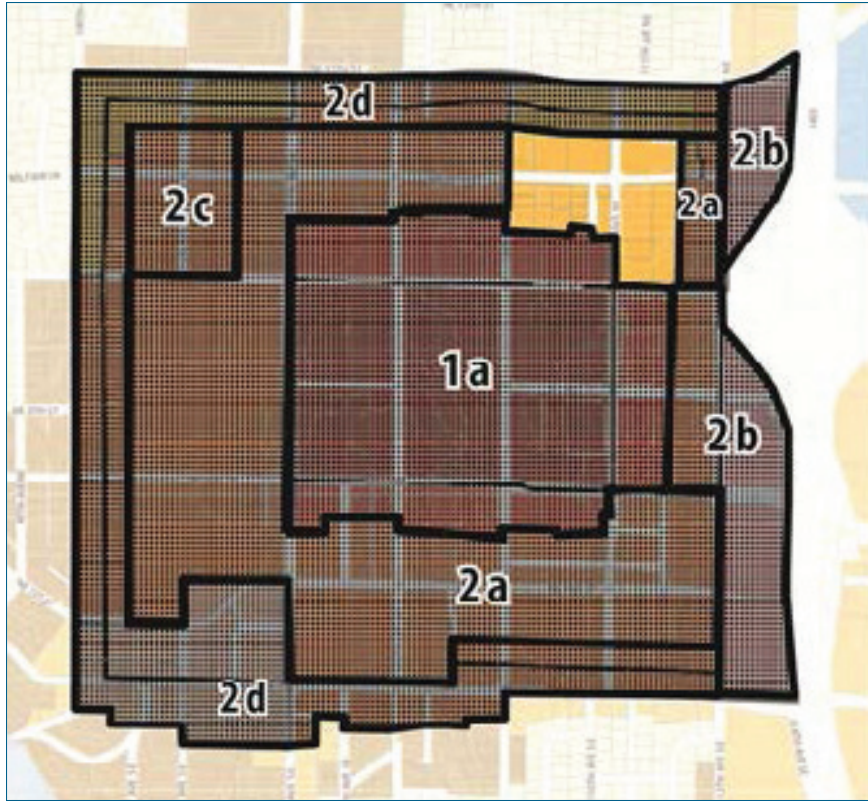
The Land Use Code addresses the effects of wind, sun/shadows and light and glare through criteria that are considered during the design review of proposed new buildings. Current criteria include designing building form and placement to minimize shading of surrounding open spaces and public areas; and designing buildings to shelter pedestrians and publically accessible areas from excessive winds [20.25A.110.A.3].

Other design criteria require that light and glare impacts on major public facilities, streets and major public open spaces be considered and mitigated. Examples of mitigation measures include use of low reflecting building materials, reorientation of buildings or use of screening devices [20.25A.110.A.5]. The City can also use its SEPA substantive authority in an appropriate case to mitigate impacts from wind, shading, light and glare.

### **Downtown Livability CAC Review**

The CAC considered height and form options in six geographical areas of Downtown as shown in Figure 10. The CAC's review of building height and form was informed by three dimensional modeling of existing and potential development in each of these areas.





**Figure 10** Downtown Height and Form Analysis Areas

*Source: City of Bellevue*

CAC discussion of building height and form focused on the following issues:

- The wedding cake concept has generally been successful for Downtown Bellevue. Some modifications may be warranted, and should recognize that height and density are particularly sensitive issues in the Perimeter Areas on the edges of Downtown.
- Interest in how additional height might be used to achieve a more memorable, iconic Bellevue skyline.
- Interest in exploring potential height increases in the Downtown core where the current limit is 450 feet, in exchange for extraordinary amenities. Based on building blocks of 150 feet, 600 feet is the next logical step for maximum height.

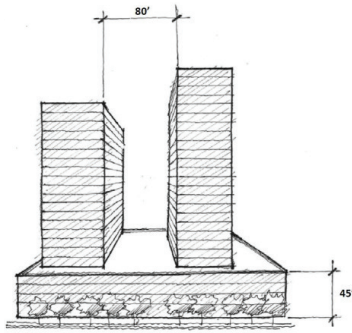
- Explore height increases for iconic roof features (non-occupiable space) based on a set of design criteria.
- May be some opportunities to allow additional height in areas outside the Downtown core in exchange for extraordinary amenities, including more open space or pedestrian connections.
- The DT-OLB District in particular should be analyzed for potential height and density increases; given its proximity to the freeway and to light rail.
- Residential and nonresidential/office towers have different floorplate needs, and thus the same density results in different building heights. Residential buildings typically have smaller floorplates to allow for light and air into units and to maximize use of each story. Office typically desires larger floorplates from a construction efficiency and tenant perspective.
- Members of the CAC had mixed opinions on equalizing residential and nonresidential height and density provisions in DT-MU district. Some felt residential buildings should continue to be allowed to be taller and of higher density. There was some concern about allowing higher office towers in DT-MU district with significantly larger floorplates than residential towers, but also a sense that Downtown residential no longer “needs” a density/height incentive.

### ***Proposed Changes to Building Height and Form***

Proposed changes to building height and FAR are shown in Table 11 on page 88. Proposed changes could result in significantly taller buildings in many downtown zoning districts—up to 150 feet higher/600 feet maximum in the central core (DT-0-1 and DT-0-2 zones). The draft Code establishes a base and maximum height for residential and non-residential uses in each zoning district. However, under the draft Code, basic height and FAR would be permitted outright; no “mandatory” amenities would be required. In order to compensate for changes to amenities in the incentive system, proposed base heights would be increased to the levels of maximum heights in the current Code.

The current Code height and FAR distinctions between residential and non-residential buildings in some districts would be eliminated, except in perimeter overlay districts. This distinction, which was originally intended to encourage residential development downtown, has achieved its purpose and is no longer needed.

Building bulk, as expressed in maximum FAR, would not change in many downtown zoning districts, but would be increased substantially in the Mixed Use, Mixed Use Civic Center and OLB districts in the eastern portion of downtown. Building floorplate sizes would be reduced for the upper stories of buildings (above 80 feet) compared to current standards. Building height, FAR and floorplate size work together to determine building form. The overall effect of the Code's proposed changes to these components of design would be to encourage taller, slimmer high-rise buildings with a well-defined, and well-designed, base, middle and tower.



Currently, the Land Use Code does not regulate separation between towers. The draft Code proposes an 80-foot minimum tower spacing requirement above 45 feet to provide separation and ensure light and air between adjacent buildings (see illustration to left). This would avoid undue pressure to construct buildings closer because of high development demand and land costs.

In general, the proposed Code would continue the established “wedding cake” pattern of building heights in downtown—tallest in the central core, and tapering down towards the edges of downtown to buffer adjacent low density residential neighborhoods. This stepping down in height, and the application of design guidelines to properties at the borders, would continue to help protect adjacent neighborhoods from extreme contrasts in height, bulk and intensity.

Assuming development pursuant to the draft Code, Downtown's future land use pattern would remain very similar to what exists today but would become incrementally more intensive over time in some zoning districts. The most dramatic changes relative to current standards for building height and development form would occur in the OLB districts along 112th Ave south of Main St, adjacent to

I-405 and the future light rail station, where new buildings could be significantly larger in scale. Maximum heights in this area would increase from 90 feet to 230 feet between Main St and NE 4th St, and to 430 feet between NE 4th St and NE 8th St. Maximum FAR would increase from 3.0 to 5.0. As noted, maximum heights in the downtown core district would increase from 450 feet to 600 feet.

The maximum heights permitted in the Code will not likely materialize in all districts or be used by all future projects and would occur over time. Based on development projects constructed over the past three decades, the City has documented that only approximately 50 percent of downtown projects used the amenity bonus to achieve maximum available heights and less than 80 percent achieve maximum FAR.<sup>1</sup> For more information about the proposed amenity incentive system, please see the Amenity Incentive System Issue Paper. The maximum heights indicated in the draft Code for each downtown zoning district, therefore, likely express a maximum impact and “worst case” for purposes of environmental analysis.

Increasing permitted height in the downtown is intended to accomplish a number of stated objectives and to produce several positive impacts. It would help the City accommodate a significant portion of Bellevue’s projected population and employment growth in the Downtown, as planned for in the Comprehensive Plan. By building up rather than out, it would use available land supply in a more efficient manner. Providing incentives to achieve increased height and enhanced roof design is also intended to encourage the City’s skyline to become more varied, prominent and visually distinctive over time.

---

<sup>1</sup> City of Bellevue. *Draft Downtown Livability Land Use Code Audits*. June 19, 2013.

## ***Environmental Implications***

Overall, this evaluation does not identify significant adverse impacts resulting from the adoption of proposed changes to building height and form in the downtown Land Use Code. While some impacts will likely result indirectly from the proposal, they are not considered to be significant for the following primary reasons. First, the context in which new development, and therefore future impacts, will occur is an urban downtown which has been developing intensively with high-rise office and residential for several decades. The type and form of development permitted by the proposed Land Use Code is not different in kind from what currently exists. Second, while proposed increases in height are substantial in some cases, they are considered incremental within downtown’s context. Downtown Bellevue is already characterized by high-rise towers, and the proposal reflects a recognition and adjustment to the realities of current land costs and development markets—more intensive development is necessary to justify land and development costs. FAR is not increasing in most downtown zoning districts, and floorplate size is being reduced (above 80 feet), so the form of development encouraged by the proposed code is taller but slimmer buildings. Height in itself is not an adverse impact but depends on context. Third, the Land Use Code’s approach is to offer additional height as an incentive in exchange for desirable public amenities, and to help achieve a livable downtown environment and distinctive urban center. Positive impacts, therefore, will occur in conjunction with increases in height. Finally, the proposed Code has been developed based on extensive analysis of what has and has not worked well in downtown Bellevue over several decades; framed by several key principles and objectives; and with consideration of extensive public input. The Code is, in effect, intended to push building design in positive directions and to mitigate impacts that could otherwise occur.

Planning and regulating an intensively developed, mixed-use residential and employment center unavoidably involves some trade-offs and impacts to some aspects of the natural and built environments. The “City in a Park” concept that is guiding downtown

planning is an expression of how various components of the environment can potentially be balanced to achieve an objective. In an urban downtown, some view obstruction and shadow effects, for example, are unavoidable. The Code's design guidelines and design review process, and SEPA review of individual projects, provide opportunities for the City to identify, consider and mitigate any impacts that could be significant in specific cases, based on proposed plans and designs.

## **Views**

Taller buildings constructed in an intensively developed downtown have the potential to obstruct existing views from adjacent high-rise buildings, from open spaces and from pedestrian corridors. This extent of any impact to views will depend on the location, height, orientation and design of future buildings, which cannot be predicted. As at present, the Land Use Code will use the design review process and SEPA review of individual proposals to assess compliance with City policies relating to views.

Existing policy support for view protection contained in the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Subarea Plan, discussed above, has not changed. However, the Land Use Code's draft design guidelines specifically address views and view protection in only limited situations. These include minimizing impacts on view corridors from pedestrian bridges (20.25A.100.D.11) and maximizing views of the sky from public spaces (20.25A.150.E). The draft Code does not specifically identify any other locations, or any specific views or view corridors that should be protected. In general, the design guidelines focus more on ensuring access to the sun and preserving views of the sky and publically accessible spaces, rather than protecting territorial views.

In June 2016, the City Council conducted a study session on the downtown Code and considered, among other things, the desirability of continuing to protect the view corridor of Mt. Rainier from the City Hall concourse. Doing so would require modifying proposed code changes for the Downtown OLB district to limit the height, bulk and/

or location of buildings on several potential redevelopment sites on 112th Ave. SE, including the Sheraton, Red Lion, Hilton and Bellevue Club sites. This area is adjacent to I-405 and near the proposed East Main light rail station, and the proposed code proposes to allow a substantial increase in development intensity. The Council discussed the values of proximity to light rail and the freeway, development opportunities, and the potential to create a vital, transit-connected and pedestrian-connected neighborhood and determined that protecting the view from one building was a lower priority. Based on this decision, the existing design guideline that protects this specific view corridor has not been carried forward to the new code.

The City could, however, use its substantive authority under SEPA, consistent with existing Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Subarea Plan policies and with general impact-avoidance language in the draft design guidelines, to maintain particular view corridors. Although such corridors are not currently mapped or formally identified, they could be identified project-by-project and considered in conjunction with design review. View protection using this approach would not be predictable, and would result in adjustments or limitations of the height, bulk, location or design of individual projects.

Based on information currently available, it would be speculative to conclude whether the existing view of Mt. Rainier from City Hall would be preserved or obstructed in the future. There are no current applications for the previously noted sites along 112th Ave. SE, so it is not possible to determine whether the existing view will, in fact, be obstructed, although it could be. Based on City development data, over the past three decades only about one-half of downtown projects constructed have used all bonuses available in the Code and built to the maximum height. It is possible, therefore, that the existing view corridor could be maintained despite the lack of a specific standard or requirement in the code, although this seems unlikely.

Development of taller high-rise buildings could obstruct some existing views from private properties in the downtown. The City does



not currently protect views from or to private buildings and it does not propose to implement such controls, beyond what is expressed in existing policy. However, several proposed design guidelines, discussed below, address protection of sky view and avoidance of shadow impacts on adjacent developments and public spaces, and these considerations could also indirectly protect private and public views in some locations.

Positive impacts to views are also likely to occur. Taller high-rise towers would create additional views of the surrounding landscape and natural features on floors that rise above existing buildings. In addition, the code's proposed tower spacing requirement would ensure separation between adjacent buildings; some existing views could be maintained in these spaces between buildings.

### **Wind, Shade and Shadow, Light and Glare**

#### *Wind*

Wind impacts can adversely affect the pedestrian environment and the use public spaces. As noted in the Downtown Livability Initiative Citizens Advisory Committee Final Report, building placement, form and modulation can accentuate wind impacts in several ways. Façade length and orientation, for example, can cause “downdraft”, in which winds hit the building façade and accelerate downward to the pedestrian level, or wind “tunneling”, in which winds accelerate and recirculate between buildings. Design solutions can include building design and orientation that is sensitive to the direction of prevailing winds; tower stepbacks that can interrupt downdraft; and pedestrian level treatments that can prevent downdraft.

Wind impacts are very site- and project-specific and can be addressed most effectively during project review. Existing tools available to the City to identify and mitigate adverse impacts include design review and SEPA review. The draft design guidelines specifically mention wind effects where multiple towers are proposed and mitigation can include staggering tower heights (20.25A.180.D.2.b.iv). In addition, proposed design guidelines generally call for minimizing the off-



site “physical effects” of new development (20.25A.150.A.2.c), and minimizing “any negative effects” on publically accessible spaces (20.25A.150.B.1). Adverse wind impacts would be encompassed by these regulations as well and could be mitigated during project review.

### *Shade and Shadow*

High-rise buildings can block views of the sky and access to the sun, which can result in shading and shadows of sidewalks and adjacent public spaces. Extensive shading can make public spaces less inviting. Building design can mitigate potential impacts, however, by considering potential impacts on adjacent public spaces and by orienting building facades to maximize solar access and to minimize shadow impacts.

Shade and shadow impacts are site-specific and project-specific, and they can be addressed most effectively during project review. Impacts also depend on and vary with time of day and season of the year. Shadow analysis is typically conducted by building designers to identify the location and extent of shadowing. The City also has several procedural tools it can use to identify and mitigate adverse impacts, including design review and SEPA review. Several provisions of the draft design guidelines seek to maximize solar access and to mitigate potential shading impacts to public spaces, including the following:

#### 20.25A.150.B.

1. Intent. Any negative impacts from new projects to adjacent publically accessible spaces should be minimized.
2. Organize buildings and site features to preserve and maximize solar access into existing public spaces wherever possible.

20.25A.150.E.2.

- a. Evaluate alternative placement and massing concepts for individual building site to secure the greatest amount of sunlight and sky view in the surrounding area.
- b. Maximize sunlight and sky view for people in adjacent developments and streetscape.
- c. Minimize the size of shadows and length of time they are cast on pedestrians in the streetscape.

20.25A.180.D.1.b.

- i. Place towers away from parks, open space and neighboring properties to reduce visual and physical impacts of the tower...
- ii. Coordinate tower placement with other towers on the same block and adjacent blocks to maximize access to sunlight and sky view for surrounding streets, parks, open space and properties.

20.25A.180.D.2.b.iv. When multiple towers are proposed, stagger tower heights to create visual interest within the skyline, mitigate wind, and improve access to sunlight and skyview.

*Light and Glare*

Reflective building surfaces can cause natural light and automobile headlights to adversely affect pedestrians and drivers. Similarly, unfiltered/misdirected or poorly designed building and site lighting can cause light-spillage which affects adjacent properties.

Light & glare impacts are site- and project-specific, and can vary depending on time of day they can be addressed most effectively during project review. Existing tools available to the City to identify and mitigate adverse impacts include design review and SEPA review. The draft design guidelines continue to require that off-site impacts, including light and noise, be mitigated (20.25A.150.A.2.c).

## Amenity Incentive System

The purpose of the amenity incentive system is to allow buildings to earn bonus development intensity, specifically increased floor area ratio (FAR) and/or height, in return for providing public amenities. Since its original adoption in 1981, the existing amenity incentive system has not been comprehensively updated and generally reflects the policy objectives and economic conditions present when originally adopted. Recognizing the significant changes in economic and market conditions in downtown Bellevue since the system was originally adopted, the City is seeking to restructure the system so that it both meets the City's development and livability goals and minimizes potential negative impacts on downtown development economics.

This paper describes the existing and proposed amenity incentive systems, summarizes policy guidance for the proposed system and assesses environmental implications associated with proposed changes to the amenity list, incentive system and building height and form. Key conclusions related to environmental implications are summarized in Table 12, below and discussed in further detail in the balance of this issue paper.

**Table 12** Key Amenity Incentive System Issues and Environmental Implications

Key Issues	Environmental Implications
Amenity List	Overall, the proposed amenity incentive system is likely to result in a beneficial or neutral impact on the environment. Individual amenities would encourage pedestrian mobility, increased open space, new community and cultural facilities, and sustainability certification, all of which are associated with beneficial impacts.
Incentive System	The incentive system itself would not generate direct adverse or beneficial environmental impacts. However, it could indirectly result in increased development of amenities and more intensive development in taller and larger buildings in the Downtown. These potential impacts are discussed in other sections of this issue paper. No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated.
Building Height and Form	Implementation of the Amenity Incentive System would result in increased building height and FAR in applicable downtown zoning districts. Please see the discussion of potential impacts associated with increased height and FAR in the Building Height and Form Issue Paper.

## Background Information

### Current Amenity Incentive System

Bellevue's amenity incentive system was originally adopted in 1981 as part of adoption of a new land use code for downtown Bellevue. The system provided a mechanism to tie increased building heights and floor area ratios (FAR) above base levels permitted in each zoning district to the provision of public amenities. Originally the system provided 16 possible amenities, which were calibrated to relate the expected economic benefit of increased building area with the estimated cost of construction of the amenity. Over time, the list of amenities has been expanded to 23.

The Downtown Subarea Plan, adopted in 2004, promotes the incentive system as a way to accomplish the public objectives set forth in the Plan. It directly calls out incentives for certain features, such as residential uses, development of themed streets, and reinforcing the unique characteristics of downtown neighborhoods (see policy guidance discussion, below).

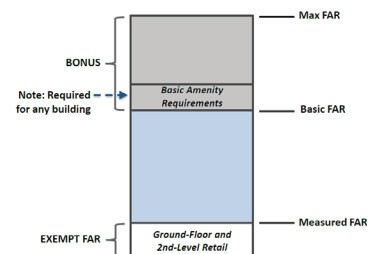
The current list of amenities eligible for bonus FAR and height is codified in LUC 20.25A.030. It includes 23 amenities, each with specific design criteria and an incentive rate used to calculate the amount of added floor area earned. Table 13 on the following page, below summarizes existing amenities available through the incentive system.

The current incentive zoning system can be described as shown in the image to the right and summarized below:

- 1. Basic FAR.** Basic FAR is calculated according to LUC Chart 20.25A.020.A.2 for Downtown Districts and LUC 20.25A.090.D for the Perimeter Design Districts. Both sections identify the basic and maximum FAR for each downtown district and perimeter design district.

### Floor Area Ratio

Floor area ratio is the ratio of total square feet of a building to the total square feet of the property on which it is located.



\*Ground-Floor and 2nd-Level Retail only exempt under certain conditions.

Current Incentive  
Zoning System

**Table 13** Current Incentive System Amenities

<b>Placemaking/Walkability</b>	<b>Parking</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Pedestrian Corridor</li> <li>• Pedestrian-oriented frontage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underground parking</li> <li>• Above-grade parking</li> </ul>
<b>Neighborhood Serving Uses</b>	<b>Weather Protection</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public meeting rooms</li> <li>• Child care services</li> <li>• Retail food</li> <li>• Space for non-profit social services</li> <li>• Public restrooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arcade</li> <li>• Marquee</li> <li>• Awning</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Outdoor Spaces</b>	<b>Housing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plaza</li> <li>• Donation of park property</li> <li>• Residential entry courtyard</li> <li>• Active recreation area</li> <li>• Enclosed plaza</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential uses</li> </ul>
<b>Landscaping</b>	<b>Arts and Culture</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape Feature</li> <li>• Landscape area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performing arts space</li> <li>• Sculpture</li> <li>• Water feature</li> </ul>

Source: LUC 20.25A.030

- 2. Mandatory Amenity Requirements.** Basic FAR is achieved through provision of a menu of amenities, including one or more of the following: pedestrian-oriented frontage, landscape feature, arcade, marquee, awning, sculpture, water feature, active recreation area, retail food, childcare services, plaza, or residential entry courtyard. This requirement is intended to ensure that all downtown development meets a minimum amenity threshold. Mandatory amenities also qualify for bonusable FAR.
- 3. Maximum FAR Amenity Requirements.** On top of the mandatory amenity requirements, developments may also select from the full list of 23 current amenities to reach maximum FAR and height.
- 4. FAR Exemptions.** Ground-floor and second-level retail space that meets specific code requirements is exempt from FAR calculations.

### *Policy Guidance*

**Downtown Subarea Plan.** The Downtown Subarea Plan was adopted in 2004 and provides the policy framework, projects and implementing actions needed to support the development of Downtown Bellevue as the primary urban center for the Eastside, consistent with countywide and regional plans. Goals and policies related to the Amenity Incentive System are listed below:

- S-DT-1    Emphasis shall be placed on Downtown livability, with provisions made for the needs, activities, and interests of Downtown residents, employees, shoppers, and visitors.*
- S-DT-9    Provide bonus incentives (related to permitted intensity, height, etc.) for private development to accomplish the public objectives outlined in this Plan.*
- S-DT-22   Provide voluntary measures for the replication or protection of historic facades or other significant design features when redevelopment occurs.*
- S-DT-24   Provide density incentives to encourage urban residential development throughout Downtown.*
- S-DT-36   Utilize development standards for building bulk, heights, setbacks, landscaping requirements, stepbacks, floor area ratios, open space requirements and development incentives.*
- S-DT-42   Reinforce the emerging identity of 108th Avenue NE as the Eastside's business address. Provide incentives for private development and utilize public funds to create a dense office environment with supporting transit service and retail uses.*
- S-DT-44   Provide incentives for 106th Avenue NE to develop as Downtown's Entertainment Avenue. This area will include a concentration of shops, cafes, restaurants, and clubs that provide for an active pedestrian environment during the day and after-hours venues for residents and workers by night.*

- S-DT-46 Provide incentives for Bellevue to realize its vision as a Grand Shopping Street, with an exciting mix of retail shops, restaurants, hotels, offices and residential units.*
- S-DT-52 Provide incentives to assist developers in implementing a major unifying design features.*
- S-DT-54 Provide incentives to reinforce unique characteristics of Downtown Districts to create pedestrian-scaled, diverse, and unique urban lifestyle experiences and options.*
- S-DT-79 Provide incentives to develop the intersection of 106th Avenue NE and NE 6th Street as a central location for public gatherings.*
- S-DT-103 Encourage developers to provide open space amenities accessible to the public such as mini-parks, plazas, rooftop gardens, and courtyards in private developments. Such amenities must be clearly identified and maintained for public use.*
- S-DT-106 Encourage new residential development to include open space and recreational amenities targeted to growing Downtown population.*
- S-DT-121 Provide incentives for multifamily residential uses and neighborhood-serving retail and service uses within Perimeter Areas to provide stability both within the Downtown Subarea and within surrounding residential neighborhoods.*
- S-DT-136 Encourage convenient and frequent transit service and provide incentives for attractive waiting areas in Downtown in recognition that transit extends the range of the pedestrian.*

**Downtown Livability CAC Review.** CAC discussion of the amenity incentive system focused on discussion of the amenities most important to achieving the desired future for Downtown, the features need to be incentivized compared to the feature that are likely to be developed without incentives, and the economics of development to ensure that the incentive system is effective.

Overall, the CAC found that, when first adopted, bonus rates were based on the developer's cost to deliver a given amenity and converted to the value of extra development rights (FAR). However, over time the system has not been modified to fit the evolution of Downtown and is no longer grounded in current market economics. The CAC concluded that the system should be updated to focus on factors that make Downtown more livable, act as a real incentive, and ensure that the system is feasible, including the following specific recommendations:

1. Update amenities to be included in the Amenity Incentive System
2. Make weather protection a development requirement
3. Consider neighborhood-specific weighting
4. Develop method to consider alternative amenities
5. Recalibrate economics of amenity incentive system

**City Council Principles.** To help focus the update and align with Council thinking, a joint workshop between the City Council and Planning Commission took place in November 2015. This resulted in a set of Council Principles to guide the update, as listed below.

1. Focus the system on making Downtown more livable for people. This should include incentivizing public open space, walkability/connectivity, affordable housing in recognition of the City's broader work on affordable housing, and other amenities that are most important to achieving Downtown livability.
2. Be forward-looking and aspirational, reflecting the evolving needs of a 21st century city.
3. Design the incentive system to help reinforce Downtown neighborhood identity.
4. Recognize that incentive zoning is one part of the broader Downtown land use code, and will work together with development standards, design guidelines and other code elements to collectively address impacts of development and ensure Downtown is a great place for people.
5. Simplify and streamline the incentive system with a clear structure and desired outcomes. This includes narrowing the list



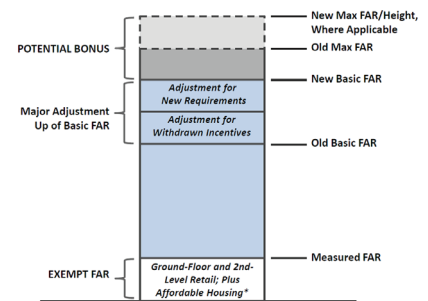
of incentives by mandating appropriate elements, incentivizing what would not otherwise happen, and increasing the base FAR to account for any current incentive that is converted to a mandate.

6. Ensure that the amenity incentive system is consistent with state and federal law. In particular, the process should be sensitive to the requirements of RCW 82.02.020, and to nexus and rough proportionality.
7. Design the amenity incentive system to act as a real incentive for developers, and ensure that modifications to the incentive system don't effectively result in a downzoning of land, in particular for current incentives converted to mandates.
8. Ensure that participation in the updated incentive system is required for any increases to currently permitted maximum density (FAR) and/or height.
9. Consider potential unintended consequences of the update, specifically:
  - a. the effect of incentive zoning changes on the ability to continue to provide transit-oriented, workforce housing in Downtown, including the anticipated effect of the MFTE on producing such housing;
  - b. the effect of incentive zoning changes on small lots, to ensure that their redevelopment remains viable and not contingent upon becoming part of an assemblage with other properties; and
  - c. special sensitivity to Perimeter neighborhoods.
10. Provide for a reasonable "fee-in-lieu" alternative to ensure that the amenity incentive system does not unduly hinder development or result in building designs that lack market viability.
11. Consider an "off-ramp" option, with an approval process, providing flexibility for incentivizing elements that were not identified in this update but add equal or greater value.
12. Include a mechanism for future periodic updates of the incentive system to address Downtown needs as they change.

## Proposed FAR Amenity Incentive System

The proposed Downtown FAR Amenity Incentive System is described below. Development of the proposed system was guided by the adopted Comprehensive Plan, CAC recommendations and the Incentive Zoning Principles adopted by the City Council in January 2016. The image to the right depicts the proposed approach. As shown, the proposed amenity incentive system would make the following changes:

- Add affordable housing to the uses that have an FAR exemption, subject to specific criteria;
- Increase the basic FAR to account for incentives removed from the system, either because the incentive is proposed to be a requirement, such as pedestrian weather protection and pedestrian-oriented frontages, or because the incentive is no longer needed, such as underground parking and residential uses; and
- Increase the maximum potential FAR in order to ensure that proposed incentives provide value to developers and will be used.



\*Ground-Floor and 2nd-Level Retail only exempt under certain conditions. Up to 1.0 FAR exemption proposed for Affordable Housing meeting specific criteria.

*Proposed Conceptual Model for  
Downtown Incentive Zoning Update*

Proposed changes to the system are more fully described below and summarized in Table 14.

**Table 14** Proposed Changes to Amenities in the Amenity Incentive System

Current Amenity Incentive System	Proposed Amenity Incentive System		
	<i>Proposed Actions</i>		<i>Corresponding Proposed Amenity</i>
	<i>Replace w/ Requirement</i>	<i>Remove</i>	
<i>Current Amenities</i>			
Placemaking			
• Major Pedestrian Corridor			• Major pedestrian corridor
• Pedestrian-oriented frontage	●		
Neighborhood Serving Uses			
• Public meeting rooms			• Neighborhood serving uses
• Child care services			
• Retail food			
• Space for non-profit social services			
• Public restrooms			

Source: City of Bellevue, 2017.

continued on following page

**Table 14** Proposed Changes to Amenities in the Amenity Incentive System (cont.)

Current Amenity Incentive System	Proposed Amenity Incentive System	
	Proposed Actions	Corresponding Proposed Amenity
Current Amenities	Replace w/ Requirement	Remove
<b>Parks and Outdoor Spaces</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plaza</li> <li>• Donation of park property</li> <li>• Residential entry courtyard</li> <li>• Active recreation area</li> <li>• Enclosed plaza</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor plaza</li> <li>• Donation or improvement of public park property</li> <li>• Active recreation area</li> <li>• Enclosed plaza</li> <li>• Enhanced streetscape</li> </ul>
<b>Landscaping</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape feature</li> <li>• Landscape area</li> </ul>	•	
<b>Parking</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underground parking</li> <li>• Above-grade parking</li> </ul>		•
<b>Weather Protection</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arcade</li> <li>• Marquee</li> <li>• Awning</li> </ul>	•	
<b>Housing</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential uses</li> </ul>		•
<b>Arts and Culture</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performing arts space</li> <li>• Sculpture</li> <li>• Water feature</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performing arts space</li> <li>• Water feature</li> <li>• Public art</li> <li>• Historic preservation</li> <li>• Historic/cultural documentation</li> </ul>
<b>Walkability</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See weather protection and place making amenities</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alleys with addresses</li> <li>• Free-standing canopies at street corners</li> <li>• Pedestrian bridges</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No existing amenity</li> </ul>		• Sustainability certification
<b>Flexibility</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No existing amenity</li> </ul>		• Flexible amenity

Source: City of Bellevue, 2017.

*1. Provide for certain amenities through other mechanisms outside of the incentive system and adjust basic FAR accordingly.*

Incentive zoning is one part of the broader land use code framework that guides development. That broader framework includes permitted uses, dimensional standards (such as lot coverage and setbacks), development standards (such as required parking ratios), and design guidelines that address the quality of development.

The Downtown Livability Initiative code amendments include proposed new development standards that would work in a coordinated way with the incentive system:

- Downtown Livability Initiative Early Win code amendments adopted earlier this year established requirements for pedestrian weather protection, which were previously included as possible amenities in the Amenity Incentive System.
- As part of the proposed Downtown Livability Initiative code amendments, a new sustainability and green factor requirement would mitigate environmental impacts associated with dense urban development and contribute to Bellevue’s “city in a park” identity. See the description of the Sustainability and Green Factor in Chapter 3.
- As part of the proposed Downtown Livability Initiative code amendments, requirements for pedestrian-oriented frontage have been integrated into development standards, removing the need for this as an option in the amenity incentive system.

*2. Remove features that are no longer real incentives and adjust basic FAR accordingly.*

In 1981, incentives for new development to put in place underground parking, above-grade structured parking and residential units were important policy goals. In recent decades this pattern has changed significantly. Today’s densities and land values virtually ensure that new parking is in structured garages as opposed to surface lots. Likewise, the downtown Bellevue residential market has been entirely transformed in recent years. With 12,000 current downtown residents, a goal of the

**Applicable Council Principles**

4. Recognize that incentive zoning is one part of the broader Downtown land use code, and will work together with development standards, design guidelines and other code elements to collectively address impacts of development and ensure Downtown is a great place for people.
5. Simplify and streamline the incentive system with a clear structure and desired outcomes. This includes narrowing the list of incentives by mandating appropriate elements, incentivizing what would not otherwise happen, and increasing the base FAR to account for any current incentive that is converted to a mandate.

**Applicable Council Principles**

5. Simplify and streamline the incentive system with a clear structure and desired outcomes. This includes narrowing the list of incentives by mandating appropriate elements, incentivizing what would not otherwise happen, and increasing the base FAR to account for any current incentive that is converted to a mandate.
7. Design the amenity incentive system to act as a real incentive for developers, and ensure that modifications to the incentive system don’t effectively result in a downzoning of land, in particular for current incentives converted to mandates.

Downtown Livability Initiative update is to ensure a continued balanced mix of office and residential uses in Downtown.

Historically, the large majority of bonuses earned have been through the parking and residential amenities. Since the market is already strongly providing for these outcomes, the amenity system is no longer needed as an incentive for private development. To compensate for withdrawing these amenities, the basic FAR would be adjusted correspondingly.

**Applicable Council Principles**

7. Ensure that participation in the updated incentive system is required for any increases to currently permitted maximum density (FAR) and/or height.

**3. *Create additional value for the incentive system through increases to maximum FAR and height***

As recommended in the Draft Downtown Livability Initiative code amendments, increases to maximum floor area ratio and/or building height must be earned through the incentive system. The recommendation includes a number of areas (such as the DT-O-1 district) where potential additional height could be earned (without additional FAR) and areas where both additional FAR and height could be earned (such as the DT-OLB district). This creates added value that can be included in the amenity incentive system.

**Applicable Council Principles**

1. Focus the system on making Downtown more livable for people. This should include incentivizing public open space, walkability/connectivity, affordable housing in recognition of the City's broader work on affordable housing, and other amenities that are most important to achieving Downtown livability.
2. Be forward-looking and aspirational, reflecting the evolving needs of a 21st century city.

Bellevue's incentive system has historically used height and FAR in tandem. However, in the recommended system, some districts would be allowed to earn additional height, but no additional FAR. This was a factor that the City considered in the calibration of the system to zoning districts and downtown Bellevue development economics.

**4. *Adjust the FAR exemption to include affordable housing***

The proposal would add 1.0 FAR for an affordable housing incentive to the list of existing FAR exemptions for ground-floor and second-level retail meeting certain design requirements. This would provide a strong incentive for affordable housing and would strategically position other desired amenities to be able to fully exploit available bonus height and/or FAR.

### 5. Focus bonus FAR on features most important to achieving downtown livability

Consistent with adopted City policy, CAC recommendations, and the City Council Principles, the proposed amenities are focused on features identified as most important to achieving downtown livability.

As shown in Table 15, city policy, as expressed through the City Council principles and CAC direction promote the following as the highest priorities to promote livability in the Downtown:

- Affordable housing
- Public open space
- Walkability/connectivity
- Cultural/community features

From a policy perspective, the City has determined that public open space is the highest priority to achieving livability through the incentive system. Accordingly, the proposal assigns 75% of the bonusable value to public open space and 25% of the remainder to walkability/connectivity, and cultural/community features.

#### Applicable Council Principles

1. Focus the system on making Downtown more livable for people. This should include incentivizing public open space, walkability/connectivity, affordable housing in recognition of the City's broader work on affordable housing, and other amenities that are most important to achieving Downtown livability.
7. Design the amenity incentive system to act as a real incentive for developers, and ensure that modifications to the incentive system don't effectively result in a downzoning of land, in particular for current incentives converted to mandates.

**Table 15** Key Amenity Incentive System Issues and Environmental Implications

Amenity Focus	Proposed Amenities	Target
Placemaking and Public Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major Pedestrian Corridor</li> <li>• Outdoor Plaza</li> <li>• Donation or Improvement of Public Park Property</li> <li>• Active Recreation Area</li> <li>• Enclosed Plaza</li> </ul>	75% of a project's earned bonus
Walkability/Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alleys with addresses</li> <li>• Free-standing canopies at street corners</li> <li>• Pedestrian bridges</li> </ul>	
Culture and Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performing Arts Space</li> <li>• Public Art</li> <li>• Sculpture</li> <li>• Water Feature</li> <li>• Historic Preservation</li> <li>• Historic and Cultural Resources Documentation</li> </ul>	25% of a project's earned bonus

Source: City of Bellevue, 2017.

**Applicable Council Principles**

11. Consider an “off-ramp” option, with an approval process, providing flexibility for incentivizing elements that were not identified in this update but add equal or greater value.

**6. *Provide process “off-ramp” for the Incentive System.***

The City Council and Downtown Livability CAC directed development of a process for developers to suggest amenities that are not on the formal list. In response a flexible amenity is included in the proposed amenity list, allowing applicants to suggest bonusable amenities through the Development Agreement process. Criteria for approval include that the proposed bonus would have merit and value to the community, that it is outside of the amenity bonus structure, and that it is not in conflict with existing Land Use Code regulations.

**Applicable Council Principles**

12. Include a mechanism for future periodic updates of the incentive system to address Downtown needs as they change.

**7. *Market adjustment and periodic review.***

Consistent with best practices for incentive zoning, the proposal includes a recommendation for an adjustment to the incentive price (proposed as annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment) to ensure the system remains current with the market. The recommendation also incorporates a periodic review (every 5–7 years) to review and modify the incentive system as needed.

**Applicable Council Principles**

2. Be forward-looking and aspirational, reflecting the evolving needs of a 21st century city.

**8. *Promote green/sustainable building through other city mechanisms.***

The draft code amendments promote green development both through the amenity incentive system and outside of it. Within the amenity incentive system, sustainability certification is included as an amenity and intended for development that meets minimum criteria for LEED or Living Building Challenge in the chosen category. Outside of the amenity incentive system, the proposal includes a Sustainable and Green Factor requirement intended to increase the use of green and sustainable elements and contribute toward improved sustainability in the Downtown. As proposed, all new downtown development would be required to meet a minimum Green Sustainability Factor score. See Chapter 3 and Appendix 1, LUC 20.25A.120, for more information about the Green Factor.

## ***Environmental Implications***

The primary environmental implications of the proposed amenity incentive system are associated with the types of proposed amenities, the likelihood that incentives will cause developers to provide amenities, and resulting impact on building height and form. Each of these implications is discussed below.

### **Amenity List**

#### *Proposed Amenities*

Draft amenities have been retained, updated or added consistent with the recommendations of the Downtown Livability CAC and City Council Principles, resulting in a system that is strategically focused on amenities that address current priorities for promoting livability in the Downtown, emphasizing open space, walkability, connectivity and community identity. See Table 14 on page 109 and Table 15 on page 113.

Overall, proposed amenities are likely to result in a beneficial or neutral impact on the environment. The proposed 1.0 FAR exemption for housing affordability could increase affordable living options for the downtown workforce employed in service and retail jobs. It could also potentially result in an indirect beneficial impact of shorter commute distances and an increased share of walking, biking and transit commuting trips for those who both live and work Downtown.

Several amenities promote walkability and pedestrian mobility, such as alleys with addresses, major pedestrian corridor, and free-standing canopies. If implemented, these amenities are likely to increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility in the Downtown, potentially resulting in indirect beneficial impacts of decreased vehicular use, decreased energy and natural resource consumption, improved air quality and decreased noise levels.

Proposed amenities that would increase or enhance open space, such as outdoor or enclosed plazas, donation or improvement of public park properties, and active recreation areas could result in



increased opportunities for informal or formal recreational activities, enhanced downtown aesthetics, and improvements to stormwater quality and quantity.

A proposed sustainability certification amenity would further support the proposed sustainability and green factor requirements to increase sustainability and resulting benefits to the natural and built environment.

Amenities that support community character and identity, such as public art, water feature, historic preservation, and historic and cultural resources documentation, could result in beneficial impacts to downtown aesthetics.

The proposal includes flexibility to allow an applicant to propose an amenity that would substantially increase downtown livability. Criteria for review of the flexible amenity include consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, merit and value to the community, and approval by City Council. While the potential impact resulting from use of the flexible amenity would depend on how it is implemented, the proposed criteria limit the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts.

#### *Deleted Amenities*

The rationale for deleting certain amenities from the incentive amenity system is based on the following:

1. The amenity is no longer needed as an incentive because the private market is providing it without any incentive; applicable to above ground/underground parking and residential use amenities.
2. The amenity would be converted to a requirement under the draft land use code; applicable to pedestrian-oriented frontages, awnings and other types of weather protection.
3. The amenity was used rarely or not at all by developers, applicable to public meeting rooms, child care services, retail food, space for non-profit social services, and public restrooms. It should be noted that the draft amenity system would retain neighborhood serving uses as an option, which would allow for “uses which reinforce a diversity of uses that serve daily needs for surrounding neighborhood residents.” (draft LUC 20.25A.020)

As described above, the proposal to remove the amenities listed above would not impact the ability to achieve or deliver these public benefits. Consequently, no significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of their deletion.

### **Incentive System**

As noted above, the staff received guidance from both the Planning Commission and Council in June 2016 regarding the proposed structure and approach to update the Downtown amenity incentive system. This followed the joint workshop between the Council and Commission that took place in November 2015 and resulted in the set of Incentive Zoning Council Principles to guide the update.

The structure and approach to update the incentive system follows the Downtown CAC recommendations and guidance provided by the Council Principles, with specific details grounded in the BERK economic analysis and peer review conducted by a ULI Technical Assistance Panel in January 2017.

The effectiveness of the proposed amenity incentive system relies, in part, on a proper balance between the cost of providing any selected amenity and the benefit to the developer in additional building space. As described above, the City has proposed changes to the list of amenities, an increase to the base FAR and to the maximum height limit in some zones, and recalibrated incentive prices to reflect current market conditions and achieve a proper balance between costs and benefits. The proposed amenity incentive system includes provisions for periodic review and adjustment to the incentive price to ensure the system remains current with the market.

While the amenity incentive system would not generate direct adverse or beneficial environmental impacts, the system could indirectly result in impacts associated with increased presence of amenities, described above, and increased number of taller and larger buildings in the Downtown, discussed below.

## Building Height and Form

Implementation of the amenity incentive system would result in increased building height and form in applicable downtown zoning districts. Please see the discussion of potential impacts associated with building height and form in the Building Height and Form Issue Paper.

## Design Guidelines

The Comprehensive Plan Downtown Subarea and Urban Design elements provide guidance for design character in the Downtown, which is implemented through the Land Use Code and the administrative design review process. Design guidelines differ from other development regulations in that their implementation is open to some degree of flexibility (i.e., in contrast to a strict numerical standard, the design guidelines may be applied differently by individual developments).

Under current code, design guidelines are implemented through the Land Use Administrative Design Review Process. All new development and major remodels in the Downtown are subject to the guidelines. Under current code, design guidelines are found in multiple code sections and, depending on where an individual development is located, multiple sets of guidelines may apply. For example, development in the DT-O-1 and DT-O-2 districts is regulated by 1) Core Design District, 2) Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space Guidelines, and 3) Building/Sidewalk Relationship Guidelines. Updated guidelines developed as part of the Downtown Livability Initiative seek to improve code clarity and readability, refine design guideline content and update review procedures.

This paper describes the existing and proposed design guidelines, summarizes policy guidance, and assesses environmental implications associated with proposed design guidelines and design departure process. Key conclusions related to environmental implications are summarized in Table 16 and discussed more completely in the balance of this issue paper.

**Table 16** Key Development Standards/Design Guidelines Issues and Environmental Implications

Key Issues	Environmental Implications
Downtown Design Guidelines	<p>Overall, environmental impacts of the proposed design guidelines are likely to be beneficial or neutral. Proposed guidelines would protect and enhance the aesthetics through architectural design measures; promote the character and usability of open space through open space design measures; continue to enhance pedestrian mobility and a pedestrian-friendly environment in the Downtown; and seek to minimize negative visual and operational impacts of on-site service uses and parking circulation.</p> <p>Compared to the existing code, the proposed code provides relatively less guidance for protection of view corridors from public places. It is anticipated that the City's substantive authority under SEPA, consistent with existing Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Subarea Plan policies would continue to be used to protect valued public views where appropriate during project-level review.</p>
Design Departure Process	<p>If adopted, this new procedural process would not result in direct environmental impacts. The potential for indirect impacts could be positive, neutral or negative depending on the nature of the application and findings of the review process. The potential impacts of a proposed departure from standards or guidelines would be evaluated as part of the project-level SEPA review and appropriate mitigation, if needed, could be applied.</p>

## Background Information

### Downtown Design Guidelines

As noted above, existing design guidelines are currently organized in multiple code sections, including guidelines applicable to specific design districts. Existing design guidelines are briefly summarized below.

#### *20.25A.065 Civic Center Design District*

This section defines the Civic Center Design District as the area bounded by 110th Ave NE on the west, NE 8th St on the north, I-405 on the east, and NE 4th St on the south. The intent is to permit the development of cultural, conference, exhibition facilities, and other uses. Specific requirements for lot coverage, building floor area, and setbacks and guidelines address building façade and ground floor treatment are described.

*20.25A.070 Old Bellevue District*

This section establishes specific development requirements for the Old Bellevue District. Requirements address street improvements, parking, minor publicly accessible spaces, and pedestrian oriented frontage and marquees or awnings.

*20.25A.090 Perimeter Design District*

This section defines the perimeter design districts as being composed of three subdistricts that follow the boundary of the Downtown Subarea along the east, south and west boundaries. The purpose of this section is to establish a stable development program for the perimeter area between Downtown and adjacent residential neighborhoods. Provisions include:

- Development standards address dimensional requirements (minimum setback, maximum lot coverage, building height and FAR), landscape standards, special design standards (upper level stepbacks, lighting and signs) and specific subdistrict requirements.
- Design guidelines address mid-block streets; arcades, courtyards or other features to offer mid-block pedestrian connections; building facades; rooftops; surface parking; and ground-level building elements.

Applicable review criteria for the perimeter design districts include provisions of this section, as well as Downtown Design Review Criteria (20.25A.110) and Design Guidelines—Building/Sidewalk Relationships (20.25A.115)

*20.25A.100 Downtown Core Design District*

This section defines the Downtown Core as the area bounded by 102nd Ave NE, NE 8th St, 12th Ave NE, and NE 3rd St. The stated purpose is to implement the Downtown Subarea Plan through more specific development guidelines and assure high levels of attractiveness, urbanity, design quality and coordination of development within the most intensive, visible portion of the

downtown. Applicable design review criteria include LUC 20.30F (Design Review Procedures) and LUC 20.25A.110 (Design Review Criteria).

Design guidelines provide for:

- *Major pedestrian corridor.* Provides detailed guidance for all aspects of the corridor, including development, design, preservation, and phasing.
- *Transit center.* Addresses location and design.
- *Pedestrian connections.* References 20.25A.060 for guidance
- *Major public open spaces.* Addresses location, development, and design.
- *Minor public open spaces.* Addresses location, design, and public access.
- *View preservation corridors.* States that view preservation corridors retain the opportunity for viewing Lake Washington, the Seattle skyline, the Olympic Mountains and Cascade Mountains from major public open spaces and the major pedestrian corridor.
- *Upper-level stepbacks.* Provides specific upper level stepback requirements for buildings facing NE 4th, NE 8th or Bellevue Way.

#### *20.25A.110 Design Review Criteria*

This section describes design criteria for administrative design review by the Director of Development services. The section also notes that additional design criteria from other sections in 20.25A may also apply. Criteria include:

- *Site design.* Vehicular circulation and parking, pedestrian circulation and amenities, wind and sun, open space, light and glare.
- *Downtown patterns and context.* Natural setting and topography, landscape design, views, building height and bulk.
- *Transitions.* Easy circulation, good relationships between open spaces, visual connections in scale, and maximum penetration of sunlight to the ground level.
- *Patterns of activity.* Opportunities for vital pedestrian-level activity, a variety of activities access to the public at large, location

of nonpublic/nonpedestrian uses adjacent to pedestrian uses

- *Signage.* Integral part of architectural design, scaled to the pedestrian, enhance the pedestrian environment, and comply with applicable requirements.

#### *20.25A.115 Design Guidelines—Building/Sidewalk Relationships*

This section establishes:

- Development standards for the street wall relationship for five different categories of rights-of-way.
- Ground-floor retail activity shall be eligible for an FAR exemption and a formula for calculating the exemption.
- Standards for mid-block connections.

### **Design Departures**

The current code does not provide a process for administrative design departures.

### **Policy Guidance**

#### *Downtown Subarea Plan*

The Downtown Subarea Plan was adopted in 2004 and provides the policy framework, projects and implementing actions needed to support the development of Downtown Bellevue as the primary urban center for the Eastside, consistent with countywide and regional plans. Goals and policies that related specifically to design guidelines include:

Policy S-DT-10 Require design review to ensure high quality, aesthetically pleasing Downtown development.

Policy S-DT-37 Link building intensity to design guidelines relating to building appearance, amenities, pedestrian orientation and connections, impact on adjacent properties, and maintenance of view corridors. These guidelines will seek to enhance the appearance, image, and design character of the Downtown.

Policy S-DT-51 Develop a strategy on how to link Downtown together through the use of literal and/or symbolic major design features that vary by district.

Policy S-DT-55 Utilize design guidelines to help differentiate development within each of the Downtown Districts as they evolve over time.

Policy S-DT-123 Establish development standards and design guidelines for Perimeter Areas that will break down the scale of new development and add activities and physical features that will be compatible both with the Downtown Subarea and surrounding residential areas.

Policy S-DT-144 Provide mid-block access corridors within a Downtown superblock which accommodates vehicle access to parking areas, loading/delivery access, and pedestrian circulation. Development specific design concepts and implement them as development occurs in each superblock.

Policy S-DT-158 Provide for the needs of bicycles and pedestrians in the design and construction of new facilities in Downtown, especially in the vicinity of the Transit Center, along the NE 6th St pedestrian corridor, and on 106th Ave NE where on-street parking and/or wider sidewalks may be appropriate.

### *Urban Design and the Arts Element*

#### Character—Downtown, Commercial and Mixed Use Neighborhoods

UD-10 Encourage rooflines that create interesting and distinctive forms against the sky within Downtown and other mixed use areas.

UD-11 Develop Downtown and other mixed-use areas to be functional, attractive and harmonious with adjacent neighborhoods by considering through-traffic, view, building scale, and land use impacts.

UD-12 Enhance and support a safe, active, connected and functional pedestrian environment for all ages and abilities.



### Design Quality—Site and Building Design

- UD-22 Employ design guidelines to affect building placement and design in order to promote solar access in public spaces and a sense of openness.
- UD-23 Encourage excellence in architecture, site design and workmanship, and durability in building materials to enrich the appearance of a development's surroundings.
- UD-25 Ensure that site and building design relates and connects from site to site.
- UD-32 Provide design treatments for blank walls that are visible from the public right-of-way.
- UD-33 Encourage public and private development to incorporate access to sunlight.
- UD-40 Employ design guidelines that guide the form and placement of large buildings to reduce wind impacts on public spaces.

### Design Quality—Downtown, Commercial and Mixed Use Developments

- UD-43 Permit high intensity development subject to design criteria that assures a livable urban environment.
- UD 45 Ensure that perimeter areas of more intense developments use site and building designs that are compatible with and connect to surrounding development where appropriate.
- UD-46 Encourage site and building designs that support and connect with existing or planned transit facilities.
- UD-47 Mitigate potential impacts to surrounding neighborhoods using landscaping, greenspace and other urban design elements.
- UD-48 Link increased intensity of development with increased pedestrian amenities, pedestrian-oriented building design, through-block connections, public spaces, activities, openness, sunlight and view preservation.
- UD-48 Incorporate architectural character, landscaping and

signs into commercial and public centers to make them functionally cohesive.

### *Downtown Livability CAC Review*

The CAC found that under existing design guidelines, the design character envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan is not being fully achieved. As described in the CAC Final Report:

*The Land Use Code audit<sup>2</sup> assessed development character in Downtown. The audit noted that, in some cases, the relationship between buildings and the sidewalk is poor and includes narrow sidewalks along key streets, discontinuous weather protection, blank walls and lack of detailing, detracting from the overall pedestrian experience. In addition, some recently constructed building facades are lacking in human-scaled details that can add character to the building and the streetscape. While many recent developments have successfully executed facades to add character and visual interest, a number would have benefitted from additional guidance. Last, some existing buildings have used façade materials that may not convey a sense of quality, durability, and permanence; or may be challenging to install correctly.<sup>3</sup>*

The CAC identified several benefits of updated design guidelines:

- Reinforcement of the sense of unique, memorable and distinctive Downtown neighborhoods.
- Increased pedestrian connectivity and permeability between Downtown and its neighbors.
- More guidance and specificity on view protection from public spaces is needed, including distant views for drivers and pedestrians.
- Greater potential for creating attractive rooftops that contribute to Downtown's skyline, are attractive when seen from other nearby taller buildings, gracefully screen rooftop mechanical equipment,

---

<sup>2</sup> City of Bellevue. *Downtown Livability Draft Land Use Code Audits*. June 19, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> City of Bellevue. *Downtown Livability Initiative Citizen Advisory Committee Final Report*. October 13, 2014.

integrate sustainable design features and incorporate useable space on rooftops.

- Use of materials that help express each neighborhood's context and character.
- Through-block connections that provide pedestrian connectivity, reinforce the character and identity of individual districts and Downtown as a whole.

CAC recommendations include:

1. Improve code clarity and readability
2. Refine content of design guidelines
  - a. Building frontage/sidewalk relationships
  - b. Pedestrian circulation/through-block connections
  - c. Building and public realm materials
  - d. Façade treatments
  - e. Rooftop design
  - f. Public views
  - g. Reinforce neighborhood character
  - h. Transition to adjacent neighborhoods
3. Update review procedures
  - a. Administrative review process
  - b. Departure criteria

### **Proposed Design Guidelines**

Compared to the current code, the proposed design guidelines have been consolidated and reorganized in LUC 20.25A.140 through 180. The guidelines apply to the entire Downtown Subarea and respond to the CAC recommendation for increased clarity and refined content. Each section is briefly summarized below.

#### *20.25A.140 Downtown Design Guidelines Introduction*

This section establishes eight predominant goals of the Downtown Design Guidelines, consistent with Comprehensive Plan guidance:

- To ensure that Downtown is viable, livable, memorable, and accessible.

- To promote design excellence, innovation, and reinforce a sense of place for Downtown.
- To improve the walkability, streetscapes, and public spaces for Downtown residents, employees and visitors.
- To foster a vibrant pedestrian environment by providing a welcoming streetscape with Active Uses, open spaces, street furniture, landscaping, and pedestrian-scaled amenities.
- To improve connectivity through Downtown and from Downtown to adjacent neighborhoods.
- To encourage sustainable and green design features, including those that promote water, resource, and energy conservation.
- To encourage the design of attractive rooftops that contribute to a memorable Downtown skyline.
- To advance the theme of “City in a Park” for Downtown, create more green features and public open space, and promote connections to the rest of the park and open space system.

#### *20.25A.150 Context*

This section provides design guidelines for five major topic areas focused on the relationship between development and the surrounding built and natural environment:

- Relationship to height and form of other development is intended to support each new development in enhancing the aesthetic quality of Downtown and its architectural context
- Relationship to publicly accessible open spaces is intended to promote the ability of development to minimize impacts on public open space and to enhance use and accessibility to public open space through site and building design
- Relationship to transportation elements is intended to promote logical connections to multimodal transportation options and minimize impacts of service and parking access on adjacent land uses and the public realm
- Emphasize gateways is intended to help celebrate entrances and transitions into and within the Downtown
- Maximize sunline on surrounding area is intended to minimize the loss of sunlight and sky view as a result of new development

A porte cochere is a covered area at an entrance to a building through which a vehicle can pass through in order for occupants to board or alight.

#### 20.25A.160 Site Organization

This section provides guidance to help promote street activation and coordinated internal circulation within the downtown superblocks that comprise the majority of the Downtown Subarea. The superblocks extend 600 feet along each side compared to a typical city block that extends 300 to 350 feet on a side. An intent statement and guidelines are provided for the following:

- On-site circulation, addressing site circulation for servicing and parking; on-site passenger and guest loading zones, porte cocheres, and taxi stands; pedestrian and cycling connections
- Building entrances, intended to help animate the street and encourage pedestrian activity in the public realm rather than inside the building
- Through-block pedestrian connections, providing opportunities for increased pedestrian movement through superblocks in Downtown and helping to reduce the scale of the superblocks
- Openspace, intended to encourage active and passive recreation, spontaneous and planned events and the preservation of the natural environment

The proposed code includes an intent statement and specific guidelines for each of these topic areas.

#### 20.25A.170 Streetscape and Public Realm

This section provides design guidelines for streetscapes, for five designations of streets according to level of pedestrian activity, for alleys with addresses and for upper level retail.

- **Streetscapes.** Contains design guidelines intended to define the pedestrian environment, protect pedestrians from the elements, create a variety of outdoor spaces, provide places for stopping and viewing, integrate artistic elements, orient lighting toward sidewalks and public spaces, and orient hanging and blade signs to pedestrians.
- **Right-of-way designations.** Provides design standards and guidelines for the streetscape organized by five major right-of-

way designations for downtown streets. Designations are as listed below and shown in Figure 4 on page 27:

- A. Pedestrian Corridor/High Street—Highest orientation to pedestrians achieved through emphasizing the design relationship between the first level of the structure and the space between the structure and the curb line. Active uses shall be provided in the design.
- B. Commercial Street—Shall have a moderate to heavy orientation to pedestrians achieved by development design so that there is a close relationship between exterior and interior activities with respect to both physical and visual access. Intended to provide a diverse and active connection between the active uses in “A” rights-of-way and other downtown streets.
- C. Mixed Street—Shall have a moderate orientation to pedestrians achieved by designing some relationship between interior and exterior activities with respect to visual access. “C” streets are to provide a major pedestrian connection between the core area and residential areas surrounding Downtown.
- D. Neighborhood Street—Shall have a low to moderate orientation to pedestrians and shall complement residential uses achieved by designing some relationship between interior and exterior activities with respect to visual access and by incorporating landscape features that soften the urban edge.
- E. Perimeter Street—May have a lower volume of pedestrians and are intended to provide a visual buffer between the downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods. Intended to provide a graceful transition to adjacent residential districts.

For each of these designations, the proposed design guidelines provide standards for transparency, weather protection, points of interest, and vehicular parking. For “A” and “B” designated streets, a standard for active uses along the street wall is also provided.

The draft code defines active uses as uses within a building that support pedestrian activity and promote a high degree of visual and physical interaction between the building interior and adjacent public realm. (Draft LUC 20.25A.020).

- **Alleys with addresses.** Intended to serve as active through-block connections and faced with a mix of retail activity and residential uses. This is to be achieved by emphasizing the relationship between the vertical street wall and the ground plane devoted to through-block access and the public right-of-way. Retail, restaurant and other commercial entries shall be provided for in the design. Design standards and guidelines are provided to achieve this intent. See Figure 5 on page 31.
- **Upper level retail.** Intended to activate the ground level pedestrian environment through extensive visual access to the upper level from the exterior, convenient and frequent access from the street or alley with address, clear line of sight from grade, and visibility of ongoing activity within the upper level retail. Design standards and guidelines are provided to achieve this intent.

#### *20.25A.180 Building Design (Base, Middle and Top)*

The building design section provides design guidelines for overall building design, building base, middle (tower), and top. Each of these subsections are briefly described below.

- **Overall building design.** Addresses use of materials and building massing, including encouraging high quality materials and providing interesting building massing.
- **Building base (podium).** Describes the role of the building base as relating tall buildings to the human scale, fit harmoniously within the street wall context, define the edges of adjacent streets, and maintain access to sunlight. Design guidelines are proposed for the following aspects of the building base.
  - » Articulate the building base with high-quality materials and design elements that fit with the aesthetic quality of neighboring buildings and contribute to the pedestrian scale and appearance.
  - » Provide clear, unobstructed views into and out from ground floor uses facing the public realm.
  - » Design inviting retail and commercial entries

- » Encourage retail corner entries
- » Encourage inviting ground floor retail and commercial windows
- » Provide multiple entrances
- » Build compatible parking structures
- » Integrate building lighting
- **Middle (tower)**
  - » Promote thoughtful tower placement in order to minimize wind impacts and the perceived scale of the building compared to the pedestrian.
  - » Maximize energy efficiency in tower orientation and articulation
  - » Design towers to accommodate changing occupancy requirements
  - » Promote visually interesting upper floor residential windows
- **Top**
  - » Create attractive building silhouettes and rooflines
  - » Foster attractive rooftops

### **Proposed Design Departure Review Process**

During the CAC review process, the CAC recommended that the City should explore potential process modifications that allow developers some flexibility through design departures to encourage creativity and unique architecture. Specifically, the CAC recommended the following:

*To further encourage exceptional design, additional flexibility is proposed. Guidelines for which a departure is available are noted in the section above. Proposed decision criteria include:*

- » *The departure would result in a development that better meets the intent of the adopted design guidelines and statements of intent.*
- » *A public benefit is derived from the departure.*



Proposed LUC 20.25A.030.D (Departures) establishes two different processes for considering a departure from strict application of the Land Use Code:

- **Administrative Departure** is intended to provide an administrative review process to modify provisions of the Land Use Code when strict application would result in a downtown development that does not fully achieve the policy vision as it is articulated in the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Legislative Departure** is intended to provide a departure process to modify provisions of the Land Use Code, and to approve final construction design for privately developed spaces that functions as part of the public realm.

#### **Administrative Departures**

- **Applicability.** LUC 20.25A.030.D. establishes that the Director of Development Services, through the Master Development Plan or Design Review processes, may administratively approve a proposal that departs from:
  - » Specific numeric standards contained in LUC 20.25A.090 (Street and Pedestrian Circulation Standards), 20.25A.110 (Landscape Development) and 20.25A.140 through 180 (Design Guidelines)
  - » Land Use Code requirements that specifically provide an opportunity for the Director to approve a departure subject to the provisions of this paragraph.
- **Decision Criteria.** The Director may approve a proposed departure if the proposal would:
  - » Advance a Comprehensive Plan objective that is not adequately accommodated by strict application of the Land Use Code; and
  - » Be more consistent with the purpose and intent of the Code; and
  - » Is the minimum reasonably necessary to achieve the Comprehensive Plan objective or code intent; and

- » Meet any administrative departure criteria required by specific terms of the Land Use Code; or
  - » Is reasonably necessary to implement or ensure consistency with a departure allowed through a Development Agreement with the City pursuant to LUC 20.25A.939.D.2.
- **Limitations.** Administrative departures may only be approved consistent with the limitations contained in the Land Use Code section that authorizes the departure or through a variance granted under the terms of LUC Part 20.30G.

### Legislative Departures

- **Applicability.** The City Council, through a Development Agreement consistent with Land Use Code provisions, may modify the following provisions:
  - » Uses prohibited under the terms of LUC 20.25A.040 and LUC 20.258A.050 when necessary to facilitate the adaptive reuse of a building; and
  - » Expansion of amenities specifically identified for participation in the FAR Amenity Incentive System (LUC 20.25A.070) to include a new Flexible Amenity; and
  - » Final construction design for certain features, including pedestrian bridges, pedestrian corridor design development plans and major public open space design development plans, that function as part of the public realm.
- **Decision Criteria.** The City Council may approve a Legislative Departure from strict application of the Land Use Code consistent with the requirements of LUC 20.30L (Development Agreements).
- **Limitations.** Provisions of the Land Use Code that are not identified as appropriate for modification through the Development Agreement process, FAR bonus values, proposals that are capable of being approved through administrative processes, and procedural provisions in LUC 20.30 or 20.35 may not be varied through the legislative departure process.

## *Environmental Implications*

### **Downtown Design Guidelines**

The Downtown Design Guidelines have been consolidated, reorganized and streamlined to improve usability. Overall, both the draft and existing guidelines continue to support adopted Comprehensive Plan direction in seeking to “...ensure high quality, aesthetically pleasing Downtown development” (S-DT-10). From an environmental perspective, the proposed design guidelines help to avoid or mitigate potential impacts of development on aesthetics and land use compatibility, pedestrian mobility and pedestrian-friendly design, open space, and on-site vehicular circulation and parking. As discussed below, environmental impacts are likely to result in beneficial or neutral impacts on the environment.

#### *Aesthetics and Land Use Compatibility*

Proposed design guidelines seek to locate the bulk of height and density projects away from lower intensity land use districts, use design features that complement adjacent buildings, minimize offsite impacts by directing light and noise away from adjacent and less intense uses. Collectively, these measures could help increase land use compatibility and provide for a smooth transition between uses that differ in height, bulk and intensity.

Design guidelines address high quality and durable materials and use of architectural elements proportionate to the size of the building. With respect to building design, design guidelines promote high quality materials, horizontal and vertical articulation, and pedestrian-scaled design. In addition, specific guidelines address the base, middle and top of towers, addressing such issues as entries, transparency, lighting, signs, energy efficiency, and attractive building silhouettes and rooflines, among others. The proposed guidelines provide new substantive guidance for architectural design and use of materials that is consistent with Comprehensive

Plan guidance and CAC recommendations. These changes could result in a beneficial impact to downtown aesthetics and land use compatibility. They are unlikely to result in any significant adverse environmental impacts.

### *Open Space*

Guidelines that address building design and relationship to open space seek to ensure that site design preserves sunlight on public open spaces and enhances the experience of using the open space. Guidelines for design of open space focus on measures to promote access, amenities, year-round use, weather protection, art, and safety and comfort. In the current code, the majority of the design guidance for open space is associated with the Pedestrian Corridor. The proposed open space guidelines carry forward, refine and expand upon existing code guidance and would apply to open space located throughout the Downtown. Proposed guidelines are consistent with adopted policy guidance and CAC recommendations and would likely result in a beneficial impact to downtown open space character and usability.

### *Pedestrian Mobility and Pedestrian-Friendly Character*

New design guidelines for through-block connections and streetscape measures addressing the pedestrian environment, weather protection, places for stopping and viewing, art and sign orientation all would encourage increased pedestrian mobility and enhance the pedestrian experience. Additional guidelines identify rights-of-way according to pedestrian activity (see Figure 4 on page 27) and provide design guidance for each classification. Taken together, these measures would enhance the ability of pedestrians to move around the Downtown and, through creating a safe and comfortable environment, would encourage increased levels of pedestrian travel. This could potentially result in indirect beneficial impacts of decreased vehicular use, decreased energy and natural resource consumption, improved air quality and decreased noise levels.

### *On-site Circulation and Parking*

On-site circulation and parking design guidelines address site servicing, passenger loading zones and taxi stands, and parking. Other guidelines emphasize logical connections to all modes of the transportation system and minimizing the negative impacts of service and parking areas. Proposed guidelines carry forward and refine existing code guidance. These guidelines are consistent with adopted policy guidance and CAC recommendations and would likely result in a beneficial impact to development character, safety and transportation mobility.

### *Views*

As noted previously, the existing code provides guidance for view preservation, stating that consideration should be given to view corridors that provide the opportunity for viewing Lake Washington, the Seattle skyline, the Olympic and Cascade Mountains from major public open spaces and the major pedestrian corridor in the Downtown Core.

Proposed design guidelines provide direction for views and view protection in more limited situations. These include minimizing impacts on view corridors from pedestrian bridges (20.25A.100.D.11) and maximizing views of the sky from public spaces (20.25A.150.E). The draft Code does not identify any specific views or view corridors that should be protected. In general, design guidelines focus more on ensuring access to the sun and preserving views of the sky and publically accessible spaces, rather than view protection. Without the specific guidance provided in the existing Code, the City's substantive authority under SEPA, consistent with existing Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Subarea Plan policies could be used to protect valued public views. However, this approach would result in a less predictable development review process for some development and less certainty about how and what types of public views would be preserved. Please see also the discussion of views in the Building Height and Form Issue Paper.

## **Design Departures**

As part of the Downtown Livability Initiative code amendments, the City has proposed a new administrative and legislative process that would allow some flexibility for design departures from certain development standards and design guidelines in order to encourage creativity and unique architecture. Specific applicability, decisional criteria and limitations are identified in the draft code; please see the description above.

If adopted, this new procedural process would not result in direct environmental impacts. The potential for indirect impacts is unknown and would depend on the nature of the application and findings of the review process and could be positive, neutral or negative. Although the departure process introduces a level of unpredictability, the application of proposed decision criteria and design guidance is intended to result in no significant adverse environmental impacts. The potential impacts of a proposed departure from standards or guidelines would be evaluated as part of the project-level SEPA review and appropriate mitigation, if needed, could be applied.

## Transportation

In the City of Bellevue 2011–2012 budget, the City Council approved capital and operating funding to support an update to the Downtown Transportation Plan, and directed the Transportation Commission to develop a comprehensive multimodal mobility strategy to support Downtown growth to 2030 and beyond. The Commission recommendations for transportation system improvements are intended to accommodate the motorized and non-motorized trips generated by a forecast increase of 28,000 jobs and 12,000 residents—representing approximately 75 percent of the planned employment growth in the city, and over 50 percent of the planned residential growth between 2010 and 2030.

To accommodate this growth in a manner that would balance the needs of people using multiple transportation modes, the City began a process to update the Downtown Transportation Plan (DTP) in 2012. A separate but related land use planning process known as the Downtown Livability Initiative (DLI) was begun in 2013. The DTP and the DLI address some of the same concerns, such as mobility and access, but each focuses on different aspects of these needs. Their mutual goal is to achieve a downtown that is easy to get around using multiple transportation modes and is accommodating to residents, workers, and visitors alike.

The recommended DTP is comprised of a comprehensive slate of transportation projects to address mobility to, from and within Downtown. Downtown mobility is based on the premise that everyone should be able to get around in Downtown Bellevue safely and comfortably, a concept that requires a balancing of the needs of vehicle drivers, transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists. The multimodal mobility strategy is intended to provide access for private vehicles and to accommodate the emerging demand for pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities. A multimodal approach to mobility considers both quantitative and qualitative measures that hone in on the types of projects that best match the needs of the

community. Transportation system improvements are intended to support mobility for the 70,300 employees and 19,000 residents that are forecast for 2030, as well as the visitors that help to make downtown Bellevue a vibrant urban center.

The environmental implications of substantively new recommendations from the Downtown Transportation Plan and transportation-related recommendations of the DLI are summarized in Table 17 below by major topic (vehicles and roadways, transit, pedestrians, and bicycles). Potential mitigation measures for the impacts are included where appropriate.

**Table 17** Key Transportation Issues and Environmental Implications

Key Issues	Environmental Implications
<b>Vehicles and Roadways</b>	<p>Average vehicle delay will increase in the PM peak hour compared to existing conditions, but there will be less of an increase with adoption of the proposed Land Use Code Amendments and no significant environmental implications are anticipated.</p> <p>Recommended changes in on-street parking and curbside load zones would provide additional parking supply and vehicle-based services to support Downtown residents and businesses. Potential impacts on traffic and non-motorized uses would be addressed on a project-specific basis and related project-level environmental review.</p>
<b>Transit</b>	<p>Recommended improvements in transit coverage, capacity, speed and reliability would improve Downtown mobility and encourage transit ridership. Potential impacts, if any, on non-transit traffic would be addressed in future corridor studies and associated environmental review.</p>
<b>Pedestrians</b>	<p>Recommended pedestrian facility improvements would enhance Downtown pedestrian mobility. Potential benefits to pedestrians and impacts to traffic flow of mid-block crossings would be assessed on a project-specific basis and related project-level environmental review.</p>
<b>Bicycles</b>	<p>Recommended bicycle facility improvements would enhance Downtown bicycle mobility. Bicycle-specific improvements, such as sharrows, protected lanes and green lanes would enhance access and safety for bicyclists, but could impact traffic operations on roadways where they are implemented. Impacts would be assessed through corridor studies or on a project-specific basis and associated environmental review.</p>



## Vehicles and Roadways

The Downtown Transportation Plan (DTP) focuses on the following components of mobility for people in vehicles on Downtown roadways:

- **Downtown access:** roadway network within Downtown
- **Regional and neighborhood access:** connections to and from Downtown
- **Roadway capacity:** roadway function in terms of vehicular delay at intersections and travel time
- **Traffic flow/efficiency:** using technology to manage traffic flow and add system capacity
- **Parking and curbside uses:** including parcel freight loading/unloading, passenger drop-off/pick-up, taxi stands and electric vehicle charging stations

### What is a Person Trip?

A person trip is one that is taken that has an origin and a destination in different transportation analysis zones (TAZs), which in Downtown Bellevue generally consist of one superblock. Trips taken within superblocks—such as a walk to get coffee—are not counted.

Employment and population forecasts were used to estimate the number of person trips expected in Downtown Bellevue in 2030 (see Table 18). The 2030 travel demand was forecasted using output from the Bellevue/Kirkland/Redmond (BKR) travel demand model with adjustments by Bellevue staff to account for the short trips within Downtown that are more likely to occur on foot than in a vehicle.

**Table 18** Growth in Person Trips: 2010 to 2030 (Rounded to nearest 1,000)

Type of Trip	2010	2030	Change
Home-Based Work Trips	55,000	104,000	49,000
Home-Based Other Trips	188,000	317,000	129,000
Non-Home-Based Trips	150,000	244,000	94,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>385,000</b>	<b>665,000</b>	<b>280,000</b>

Source: City of Bellevue

Of the 665,000 projected person trips, 578,000 are expected to be trips coming in or going out of Downtown, while 137,000 are trips within Downtown. Of these trips within Downtown, 11,000 are expected to be transit trips, 50,000 are expected to be auto trips, and 76,000 are expected to be short-distance walk trips.

Between 1990 and 2013, the number of vehicle trips at specific measurement points on arterials in Downtown Bellevue remained relatively constant, despite substantial growth in jobs and population. To assess the function of downtown intersections with the intent to identify potential roadway capacity projects, staff in the City's Transportation Modeling and Analysis Group built and implemented a dynamic traffic assignment forecast—using software called “Dynameq”—to document existing (2010) intersection level-of-service (LOS) and to forecast 2030 LOS; the Dynameq model assumes planned and funded changes to the transportation network, including the reasonably foreseeable future projects outlined on the following page. These projects will improve vehicle access to the regional roadway system (I-405) and connectivity to east Bellevue and the BelRed Subarea. They will also accommodate more vehicles, and help reduce growth in congestion in Downtown, especially on east-west arterials. Proposed projects and recommendations in the DTP are compared against modeling of future projected traffic levels from the Dynameq model.

Based on the modeling results, the DTP determined that all but one intersection would meet the city's level of service (LOS) standard of E+ for Downtown intersections, and that adding general purpose vehicular capacity beyond the baseline scenario would not be needed to accommodate 2030 projected growth. The modeling shows that some intersections may approach a level of congestion that would require operational or capacity modifications, but that implementation of coordinated and adaptive signal system technology (Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System or SCATS) has been effective at optimizing the available capacity of the roadway system while also better accommodating the needs of pedestrians and transit (see Figure 6 on page 36 and Table 19 on page 143).

### **Level-of-Service (LOS)**

LOS standards are measures set by the City to ensure quality public services, such as transportation.

The adopted intersection level-of-service standard for Downtown Bellevue requires an average intersection LOS of E+, which roughly translates to a delay of less than 80 seconds. The average delay was 27 seconds in 2010.

## Reasonably Foreseeable Planned Future Roadway and Transit Capacity Projects

“Baseline Scenario” projects are those that had substantial funding commitments in 2010 by state, regional and local agencies, plus other projects that were reasonably foreseeable at the time. Other projects that had advanced through the planning process in terms of both design and funding commitments to the point where they can be considered reasonably foreseeable are included under the “Build Scenario.” All of these projects were either under construction or were expected to be constructed by 2030 and, as such, all projects are included in the Baseline Scenario for the purposes of this issue paper.

### Baseline Scenario

**East Link Light Rail:** Light rail between Seattle and Redmond through Bellevue, with a station in Downtown Bellevue

**RapidRide B:** Bus rapid transit between Downtown Bellevue and Downtown Redmond

**NE 2nd Street:** Widen to five lanes between Bellevue Way and 112th Ave NE

**110th Avenue NE:** Widen to five lanes between NE 6th St and NE 8th St

**NE 4th Street:** Extend from 116th Ave NE to 120th Ave NE

**NE 6th Street:** Extend across I-405 from the center HOV direct access ramps to 120th Ave NE

**120th Avenue NE:** Widen to five lanes between NE 4th St and NE 15th St

**124th Avenue NE:** Widen between NE 8th St and NE 15th St

**NE 15th/16th Street (Spring Boulevard):** New roadway segments in the BelRed Subarea

**Bellevue Way SE:** One high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane southbound from 112th Ave SE to the South Bellevue Park & Ride to align with the planned southbound HOV lane between the park and ride and I-90

### Build Scenario

**SR 520:** New ramps to/from east at 124th Ave NE to complete the interchange

**SR 520:** Eastbound slip ramp under 148th Ave NE to connect to 152nd Ave NE and the Overlake Village area in Redmond

**I-405:** Southbound braid from SR 520 to NE 10th St

**I-405:** One auxiliary lane (collector/distributor) each direction, between SE 8th St and SR 520; the portion north of Main St will be accomplished through restriping, not additional widening

**Table 19** Forecast Change in PM Peak-hour Traffic Volumes and Level of Service: 2010 to 2030

Measure	2010	2030
<b>PM Peak Hour Vehicle Volume<sup>a</sup></b>	82,000	119,000
<b>Average Delay per Vehicle at Intersections (seconds)</b>	27	48
<b>Average Level-of-Service for all Downtown Intersections</b>	LOS C (LOS C ranges from 20-35 seconds)	LOS D (LOS D ranges from 35-55 seconds)
<b>Total Delay (hours) for all Vehicles in the PM Peak Hour<sup>a</sup></b>	600	1,600

<sup>a</sup> Rounded to nearest 1,000

Source: City of Bellevue

*Parking and Curbside Uses.* The DTP evaluated on-street parking and other uses for curbside space, including parcel/freight loading/unloading, passenger drop-off/pick-up, taxi stands and electric vehicle charging stations. Recommended types of projects include:

- Providing additional on-street parking at high-opportunity locations; and evaluating additional parking in moderate opportunity locations
- Installing parking meters for pay parking
- Designating new passenger drop-off/pick-up areas/loading zones
- Accommodating temporary taxi stand use along the curb during evenings and weekends
- Installing electric vehicle charging stations

### Environmental Implications

The DTP modeling analysis shows that on average, the Downtown intersections would meet City LOS standards in 2030 with operational mitigation and Baseline Scenario transportation capacity improvements. In addition, the changes to development patterns that would result from the proposed Downtown Livability Initiative (DLI) code amendments would improve traffic operations and reduce delays compared to the 2030 baseline scenario. By

**Table 20** 2030 Forecast Vehicle Delay and LOS in Downtown Bellevue, DTP vs DLI

Measure	2010	2030 DTP	2030 DLI	Difference between 2030 DTP and DLI Scenarios
<b>PM Peak Hour Vehicle Volume<sup>a</sup></b>	82,000	119,000	117,000	-2,000 (2%)
<b>Average Delay per Vehicle at Intersections (seconds)</b>	27	48	45	-3 (6%)
<b>Average Level-of-Service for all Downtown Intersections</b>	C (LOS C ranges from 20-35 seconds)	D (LOS D ranges from 35-55 seconds)	D (LOS D ranges from 35-55 seconds)	No change
<b>Total Delay (hours) for all Vehicles in the PM Peak Hour<sup>a</sup></b>	600	1,600	1,500	-100 (9%)

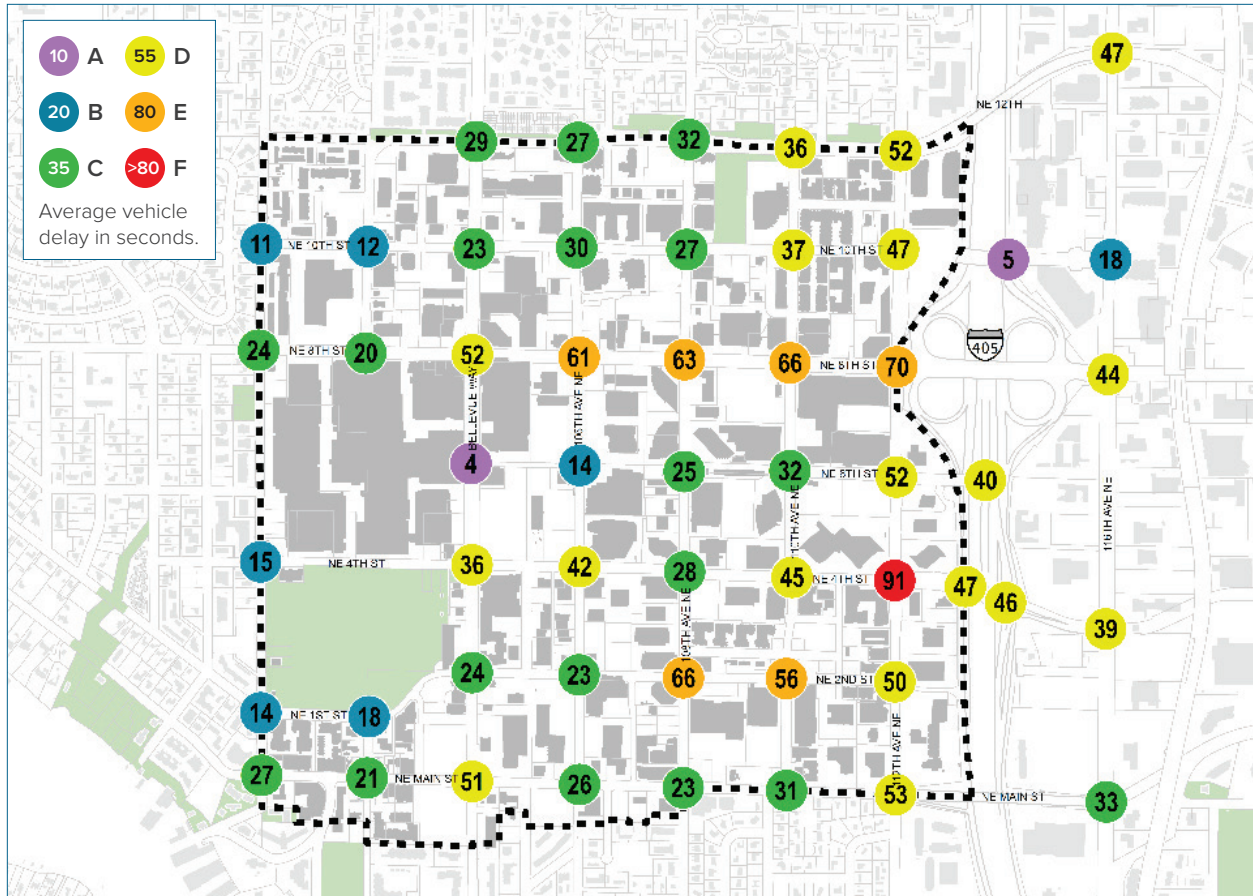
<sup>a</sup> Rounded to nearest 1,000

Source: City of Bellevue

making changes to the allowed building height and floor area ratio in different areas of Downtown, some of the forecast jobs would be redistributed to areas north, south, and east of the Downtown Core. While the Downtown Livability Initiative and the Downtown Transportation Plan used the same market forecast for residential and employment growth in 2030, potential changes to development patterns resulting from the DLI code amendments, relative to the DTP assumptions, include:

- An additional 1,132 residents and 4,504 fewer jobs in the Downtown Core area in 2030.
- An additional 2,416 jobs and 1,132 fewer residents in the areas north and south of the Downtown Core.
- An additional 2,088 jobs by 2030 in the Downtown Office and Limited Business (OLB) district.

As shown in Table 20, the 2030 PM peak-hour volume, average delay and total delay would all decrease with implementation of the proposed Downtown Livability Initiative (DLI) land use code amendments. The 2030 average vehicle delay at Downtown intersections is shown in Figure 11.



**Figure 11** 2030 Average Vehicle Delay at Downtown Intersections (based on DLI scenario)

Source: City of Bellevue

The DLI scenario would improve future overall Downtown roadway operations relative to the DTP scenario by changing the distribution of trips. Overall, the DTP scenario would provide for vehicle circulation well within the adopted LOS for Downtown intersections, and implementing the DLI scenario would shift travel demand away from the Downtown Core, thereby relieving some pressure on intersections within the Downtown Core.

*Parking and Curbside Uses.* The DTP identifies recommended changes to the supply of on-street parking, implementing paid parking, and adding new uses to curbside lanes, such as new drop-off/pick-up

areas, loading zones and taxi stands. Benefits to residents, businesses and visitors are likely to accrue with the recommended curbside uses that provide for a transfer of people and goods between the street and the sidewalks and buildings. New pick-up/drop-off locations, load zones, taxi stands, etc. are expected to be established through new development, and generally would not use existing travel lanes during peak vehicle travel times. Changing the use of curbside lanes to provide additional on-street parking supply is not expected to significantly affect traffic because the DTP recommends most of these changes be effective during off-peak-traffic times. Potential impacts on traffic, as well as non-motorized uses, would need to be evaluated for specific proposals as those are developed.

### *Transit*

In consideration that Bellevue does not operate a transit system, but the City does own, operate and maintain the roadways and intersections upon which transit relies, the DTP focuses on the following four transit system components:

- Transit coverage
- Transit capacity
- Transit speed and reliability
- Transit passenger comfort, access and information

#### *What is Transit Coverage?*

Transit coverage, for purposes of the Downtown Transportation Plan, is the percent of Downtown residents and employees who live or work in a Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) that is within 600 feet of a bus stop with frequent service or a light rail station. A TAZ is generally a Downtown “superblock” that is 600 feet wide, so the transit coverage geography is the area within about 1,200 feet of a stop/station.

The Downtown Bellevue **transit coverage in 2010** was 86 percent. With planned transit system improvements and focused land use growth along transit priority corridors, transit coverage is expected to increase to 97 percent in 2030. To achieve the 2030 anticipated transit coverage, recommendations in the DTP include:

- Modifying existing or future transit routes to better serve the northwest and southeast quadrants of Downtown
- Providing a successor to the Sound Transit 550 route to serve the southwest quadrant when East Link begins operations in 2023
- Providing a route with frequent service on 116th Avenue NE to serve local hospitals

The number of transit trips (boardings and alightings) is projected to increase almost five-fold by 2030, from 10,000 to 57,000. The



DTP identifies the infrastructure needed to accommodate these trips, while the Bellevue Transit Master Plan (2014) addresses how to provide service to these riders. The greatest demand is expected to occur during the PM peak hour (5 PM to 6 PM), when 210 buses would be on Downtown streets. Based on industry standards, the amount of space at the Bellevue Transit Center (BTC) bus bays and the passenger platform appears adequate to accommodate the forecasted demand, although the existing placement of amenities (benches, signs, and windscreens) restricts passenger access, obstructs the flow of transfers, limits the space for queuing, and fails to capitalize on the weather-protected space. DTP recommendations for **transit capacity** include:

- Articulate policy support and advocacy for sustained and enhanced transit service
- Design modifications to improve the function and flow of the passenger platform of BTC

To address **transit speed and reliability**, Bellevue may invest in capital improvements or perform traffic operation changes to benefit transit passengers and overall mobility. The DTP identifies a hierarchy of transit priority corridors and intersections (see Figure 7 on page 38) where the following types of improvements could be made to improve speed and reliability:

- Transit priority lanes
- Peak hour transit-only lanes
- Bus/bicycle lanes
- In-lane bus stops
- Business access and transit (BAT) lanes
- Transit signal priority
- Improvements to pedestrian environment
- Transit stop consolidation
- Off-board fare payment

To support potential improvements to passenger amenities related to **comfort, access and information**, the DTP recommends a set of transit stop “typologies” to categorize transit stops and identifies a suite of components that may be integrated into each type of



transit stop and its vicinity. These four typologies and recommended components are shown in Table 5 on page 39.

To implement these improvements, Bellevue will continue work with transit agencies and developers to improve facilities. The transit agencies are generally responsible for constructing, installing, and maintaining transit shelters, and these improvements can be supplemented with city resources or private development components. The DTP also recommends that development incentives be implemented through the DLI to integrate transit stop/station components, such as enhanced weather protection, seating, and wayfinding, into the design of buildings near existing or planned transit stops. The recommended DLI land use code amendments include incentives to encourage installation of free-standing canopies at street corners and transit stops to provide weather protection—this type of feature is a component of an Enhanced or an Exceptional Intersection. Maintenance of transit stops also could be supported through sponsorships or an adopt-a-stop program. Lastly, the function and flow of the BTC could be improved with the removal and/or rearrangement of benches, windscreens, wayfinding, telephone booths, and kiosks.

See description of intersection treatments for pedestrians, including Enhanced and Exceptional intersections on page 150.

### Environmental Implications

Recommended improvements to **transit coverage** in the DTP would provide better transit access to a larger area of Downtown and allow transit service to be accessible to more people than it is currently. This would also help to address **transit capacity**, along with proposed operational improvements, such as transit priority corridors and signals and bus-only lanes. These operational improvements would be emphasized on Transit Priority corridors and intersections, and would also benefit **transit speed and reliability**. Changes that result in increased transit ridership take pressure off of the roadway system to accommodate more vehicles. The potential impacts of transit improvements on non-transit traffic would be evaluated as part of the proposed corridor studies, as described in the text box at right.

### Corridor Studies

The projects and recommendations identified in the DTP and DLI suggest multiple types of improvements along Downtown transportation corridors to meet the needs of people using different modes. These corridor studies will balance the needs of multiple modes over several corridors, recognizing that some corridors may prioritize one mode over another. This may result in some corridors prioritizing pedestrians and bicyclists, some prioritizing transit, and some prioritizing motor vehicles. The DTP recommends that a corridor study be completed to evaluate how to best balance the needs of all these modes on the following corridors:

- » 106th Avenue NE between Main Street and NE 12th Street
- » 108th Avenue NE between Main Street and NE 12th Street
- » Main Street between 100th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE

The purpose of corridor studies is to identify specific planned improvements to these corridors and evaluate potential benefits to Downtown mobility.

Other improvements for **transit speed and reliability**, such as off-board fare payment, improvements to the pedestrian environment, and transit stop consolidation, are likely to benefit ridership and not likely to have impacts on non-transit traffic. Consolidating transit stops at fewer locations could mean longer walking distances for riders and more frequent stops at fewer locations on particular corridors. This likely would occur on Transit Priority corridors, where transit would be the emphasized mode and non-transit vehicle traffic has the option to use other corridors. Therefore, any potential impacts on general-purpose traffic in these corridors are likely to be offset by benefits in other corridors and by the enhanced reliability of transit. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements that provide access to transit stops/stations would also benefit non-transit users.

Recommended projects to improve transit rider **comfort, access and information** would make the transit rider experience more positive, which would encourage more people to use transit and would not have a direct impact on non-transit riders. Improving the use and flow of the BTC will also help improve transit capacity.

## ***Pedestrians***

The DTP focuses on four components of the pedestrian environment:

- Intersections
- Mid-block crossings
- Sidewalks
- Through-block connections

The DTP recommends three types of **intersection** treatments: Standard, Enhanced and Exceptional. Standard intersections are the most common, with pavement striping spaced 8-feet apart and pedestrian actuated signals. Enhanced intersections are wider than standard to accommodate higher numbers of pedestrians and provide separation from vehicles, and may include wayfinding and freestanding weather protection at corners, special pavement treatment or striping across the street, and curb bump outs or tighter radius to shorten the crossing distance, calm traffic and provide pedestrian queuing areas. Exceptional intersections may incorporate components of Enhanced intersections, and may also include a pedestrian scramble signal phase, raised crossings, and landmark freestanding wayfinding. Intersections identified as Exceptional include those along the Pedestrian Corridor (NE 6th Street at 110th Avenue NE, 108th Avenue NE, 106th Avenue NE and Bellevue Way), in Old Bellevue across Main Street, and at the 102nd Avenue NE and NE 1st Street entrance to the Downtown Park.

The Downtown Subarea Plan encourages implementation of **mid-block** crossings to help reduce the scale of the superblocks in Downtown Bellevue; the locations of mid-block crossings recommended in the DTP are shown in Figure 8 on page 41. These crossings could include full signalization, warning beacons, median islands or grade-separated pedestrian bridges. The City Council has approved the location of several pedestrian bridges already, including across Bellevue Way, NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street, and the DTP recommends additional locations, including across NE 6th Street between the City Hall Plaza/future East Link light rail station and Meydenbauer Center. The DTP provides

recommendations on signalization, signage, crosswalk markings and medians and planters.

The Downtown Land Use Code prescribes the width of **sidewalks** and landscaping treatment adjacent to the street. Both the private and public sector are responsible for implementing these provisions in new projects. The DTP recommends a land use code amendment to increase the required width of the sidewalk along certain heavily traveled street segments (such as 106th Avenue NE) from 12 to 16 feet to accommodate more pedestrians, window shoppers and café seating. As described in Chapter 3, wider sidewalks consistent with this recommendation were previously approved as part of the Downtown Livability Early Wins code amendments (LUC 20.25A.090). The DTP also recommends a continuous landscape planter instead of trees in tree grates along streets with no on-street parking.

Though the Downtown Land Use Code already requires **through-block connections** be incorporated into new development, the connections are implemented inconsistently and it is difficult in some cases to know where the connections lead or if pedestrians are welcome. To address this, the DTP recommends certain design refinements—such as standard public access wayfinding, commonly recognizable paving materials or inlays, and universal accessibility according to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. These recommendations are addressed in the proposed land use code amendments through the design guidelines for through-block connections, see LUC 20.25A.160.D in Appendix 1.

In addition to these four components of pedestrian mobility, the DTP recommends design considerations for the **Pedestrian Corridor** to improve accommodations for bicyclists without intimidating pedestrians, such as integrating special paving and wayfinding. The DTP also recommends that the Downtown Livability Initiative process identify specific code-related strategies for implementing these design improvements to the Pedestrian Corridor. Proposed land use code amendments for Pedestrian Corridor design can be found in LUC 20.25A.090.C.1 and 20.25.A.170.B.1 (see Appendix 1).

### ***What is the Pedestrian Corridor?***

The Pedestrian Corridor—a 60' wide corridor along the alignment of NE 6th Street between Bellevue Way and 110th Avenue NE—is considered a high priority route for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Development of this corridor has been ongoing since first envisioned in 1981. The corridor will be increasingly important as new development occurs and light rail becomes an anchor destination on the east end. It is part of a “Grand Connection” that will extend from Meydenbauer Bay, through Downtown and to the Wilburton neighborhood east of I-405.

Pedestrian Corridor Strategy #1 from the Downtown Livability Initiative recommends extending the corridor east to 112th Avenue NE, through the City Hall superblock, to be more integrated with the Civic Center District and the future light rail station.

### **Environmental Implications**

Most recommended improvements to **intersections** would not likely have impacts to vehicle traffic, and Enhanced and Exceptional intersections would improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Improvements at some intersections may involve rechannelization to provide space for curbed bumpouts; the potential impacts on traffic from these bumpouts would be evaluated during project development for such improvements. The widening of **sidewalks** in some areas to 12 to 16 feet would improve the pedestrian environment and would not likely have adverse impacts non-pedestrian uses, as these widened sidewalks would occur as part of new development and would not take travel lanes from the roadway. Wider sidewalks would facilitate moving greater numbers of pedestrians and make these areas more desirable to walk through, encouraging more “walk-trips.”

Locations and design for **mid-block crossings** would be evaluated with respect to benefits to pedestrians as well as potential impacts to vehicle traffic. Pedestrians using a mid-block crossing would have a shorter walk distance compared to using an intersection to cross the street. Traffic stopping at mid-block crossings could result in delay compared to typical current conditions, where vehicles traverse an entire superblock unimpeded. However, the addition of these crossings would improve pedestrian circulation and improve safety

by providing signalization for crossings or pedestrian bridges. These crossings also may extend **through-block connections**, making the pedestrian experience more comfortable by breaking down the size of superblocks and providing an alternative to walking out of direction to cross at intersections. Improvements in wayfinding and weather protection that are recommended in both the DTP and DLI would make the pedestrian experience more pleasant and encourage walking within Downtown.

Building on the past work to implement the NE 6th Street **Pedestrian Corridor** is also emphasized in both the DTP and DLI recommendations. While this corridor is well established in many segments, improvements can be made in the future to improve the flow and interaction of bicycles and pedestrians, and to make the pedestrian experience more comfortable to encourage greater use. Many of these improvements would occur as adjacent properties are redeveloped and would be promoted through the Amenity Incentive Program recommended in the DLI land use code amendments. In addition, extending the corridor east to 112th Avenue NE would improve access to the East Link light rail station next to City Hall and encourage greater pedestrian and bicycle access to this station. Increasing the attractiveness of this corridor to pedestrians and bicyclists may reduce demand for these uses on other nearby east-west roadways, making this the preferred route for this direction of travel.

## ***Bicycles***

The City completed a Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Plan in 2009, which identified citywide priority bicycle corridors. North-south corridors are on 108th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE/114th Avenue NE, and east-west corridors are on Main Street and NE 12th Street. Figure 9 on page 43 shows the recommended bicycle facilities intended to provide bicycle access throughout the Downtown.

The DTP recommends implementing new tools and providing a robust bicycle wayfinding system. Bicycle facility recommendations include east-west corridor improvements on Main Street and NE 12th

Street, and north-south corridor improvements on 100th Avenue NE and 114th Avenue NE/112th Avenue NE. Corridor analyses for these roadways will be used to determine what types of facilities are needed for all users to safely and comfortably share these roadways. The DTP also recommends a pedestrian and bicycle overpass across NE 8th Street along with improving bicycle facilities along portions of the NE 6th Street Pedestrian Corridor.

Specific types of improvements could include:

- **Shared lane marking (sharrows):** a painted marking in a travel lane to indicate the presence of bicycles, provide wayfinding guidance, and mark the suggested position for bicycles in the lane
- **Protected bicycle lane:** a one-way or two-way bicycle lane physically separated from moving traffic by a painted or physical buffer
- **Green bicycle lane:** a bicycle lane that is painted green along the full length or at potential traffic conflict points
- **Green bike box:** location at an intersection that is painted green to indicate the preferred location for bicyclists to wait for a signal change

To address the demand for short-term bicycle parking, sidewalk bicycle racks are installed and maintained by the City when a demand is noticed or they are requested. The DTP also recommends a land use code amendment requiring or incentivizing new development to include onsite long-term/commuter bicycle parking together with lockers, and showers. Recommended amendments to LUC 20.25A.080 include new requirements for the number of bicycle parking spaces.

To improve access to the two planned East Link light rail stations to serve Downtown, the DTP recommends the use of special pavers and signage to make access more intuitive and comfortable. The East Main Station will include pathways on the south side of Main Street that bicycles will be able to use.

The DTP also recommends exploring the potential of a bike share program for Downtown Bellevue. A feasibility and business plan would need to be completed prior to determine the viability of such a system.

### **Environmental Implications**

Many of the projects described above to benefit pedestrians would also benefit people riding bicycles, especially through-block connections. Other bicycle-specific improvements, such as sharrows, protected bicycle lanes, and green bicycle lanes and boxes would significantly benefit bicyclists, and depending on how these facilities are implemented, could negatively affect traffic operations. Potential impacts would be evaluated in conjunction with proposals for specific improvements, and as part of the corridor studies for the roadways (see page 149 for a list of recommended corridor studies). Adding such facilities to some roadways would improve access and safety for bicyclists and help focus bicycle traffic on those roadways, allowing other roadways to focus on serving transit or non-transit vehicles. Of the various types of improvements, a bicycle facility that is physically separated from traffic would have the greatest safety benefit for people riding bicycles.

Non-roadway improvements, such as the addition of short-term and long-term bicycle parking, wayfinding, a bike share program, and encouraging amenities for bicyclists in new development, would further support bicycling as a convenient and easy way to get around Downtown, reducing the need for motor vehicles. Such reductions in the growth of vehicle trips would improve circulation for all transportation modes within Downtown Bellevue.





# 7

## SEPA Environmental Checklist Part C: Signatures

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Signee \_\_\_\_\_

Position and Agency/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted \_\_\_\_\_



# APP. 1



## Draft Code Amendments



